THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

MARCH 1960

Marxism Today

BOB LEESON — DEFENCE POLICIES OF THE WESTERN POWERS

KAY BEAUCHAMP — THE COMMON STRUGGLE OF THE BRITISH AND COLONIAL PEOPLES

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Monthly 1/6

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Marxism Today

Vol. 4 No. 3

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Central Books Ltd.,
37 Grays Inn Road,
London, W.C.1.

Subscription rates
Six issues 10s. 6d.
Twelve issues 21s.

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Defence Policies of the Western Powers

Bob Leeson

THE world balance of power, so long weighted in favour of capitalism, has shifted decisively. Mr. Khrushchov has announced arms cuts which will bring the Soviet armed forces down to 2,423,000, their lowest level for some twenty years; the scrapping of manned bombers and many surface naval vessels, and the reduction of the military budget to around £7,000 million a year. President Eisenhower has announced increases in the American Navy's surface and underwater fleet, the maintaining of the level of the armed forces, an increase in rocket production and an increase in the military budget to over £14,000 million a year.

One might think that these details belie the assertion in the first sentence of this article. But it is the statesman with the smaller navy, manpower and arms budget who is confident, while his opposite number shows the signs of inferiority.

The economic, strategical and military situation which obtained in post-war years has changed irrevocably. And no one is more conscious of the problems this raises than the strategists and military thinkers in the West. Previous policies have failed completely and they are unable to work out any alternatives. The anti-Soviet strategy remains, but in a world situation in which it becomes increasingly difficult to operate.

Professor P. M. S. Blackett, who knows his military men, wrote in the *New Statesman* on December 5th last year:

> "I will proceed, therefore, on the basis that there is at present in Britain no consistent and intelligible operational defence policy. Nor is there, in fact, in the United States. . . ."

This was clearly shown when American military experts testified before Congress in mid-January on the relative military positions of the United States and the Soviet Union. They disagreed about what sort of war they were preparing to fight, how they would fight it, and whether they would win or not. They were agreed only in one thing—they wanted more of the weapons with which to fight the particular war they each had in mind. In military circles, frustration and confusion is the order of the day.

This is all the more remarkable when one looks back to the immediate post-war years and considers the Western position.

The Western Alliance

Within four years of the end of the war, the West had shaped an aggressive military and political alliance, with combined staff, which was to include the United States, Canada and European States, some extraordinarily powerful, covering populations totalling 420 million. At the alliance's centre, the United States was the greatest industrial power in the world, more rich and powerful than when it entered the war. With it were the major colonial powers, France, Britain, Holland, Belgium, Portugal, with apparently unlimited supplies of raw material.

The Western alliance had the atomic bomb and material and technical resources to develop this entirely new and unconventional form of warfare in even more destructive forms. It had land, air and naval bases in most points of the globe, formidable air forces basing themselves on the obliteration techniques of the last war, huge naval task forces, capable of transporting masses of men, armour and aircraft rapidly across long distances—also a product of the last war.

The Soviet Union and its allies in Eastern Europe counted in population not 300 million. Most of these countries entered the war as backward agrarian states whom no one would dream of taking seriously in a military sense. With the Soviet Union they came out of the war counting their dead, wounded and missing in tens of millions, industry shattered, agriculture laid waste. Such armed forces as the East European countries had were gathered slowly and trained with difficulty—they had been obliged to dispense with many officers capable in a military sense, but attached to pre-war reactionary regimes.

Not until well after the formation of NATO did they have a joint command. Outside their own frontiers they had no bases, no material resources. Only the Soviet Union had a large army, navy or air force. And this alliance had, at first, no atomic weapons.

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It should be said here that despite all the tales, it is extremely doubtful if, at any time during the post-war years, the countries which formed the Warsaw Pact alliance had larger total armed forces than the NATO powers.

Today, according to figures prepared by Western experts, the balance is about 6,000,000 in NATO against 4,500,000 in the Warsaw Pact countries.

With the Soviet reductions and the planned increases in West German forces, and despite the run-down of British armed forces, the NATO manpower superiority will grow. Even *The Times* (15.1.60) felt constrained to say:

> "It is high time the NATO authorities gave up using the time-honoured figure of 175 Soviet divisions as a bogey for frightening their member countries."

(This did not, however, prevent Mr. Wilbur Brucker, U.S. Secretary of the Army, from trying to frighten Congress with this time-honoured figure in mid-January.)

At all events, whatever the capacity of the Soviet Union to put 175 divisions in the field during the period of the cold war, that period began with a marked Western superiority—notably atomic superiority.

Given the professed desire of the NATO powers to seek only peace and use atomic superiority to maintain it, it should be a matter for surprise that the period of Western superiority was one of tension and the ever-present danger of war.

Then, we were told, the Soviet armed forces were poised for the attack. Only the thought of the atomic horror that would meet them held them back—so went the stock Western propaganda line.

This was a period of hate and fear which finally began to pass away (remarkably, if we accept NATO pretensions), not when the Soviet Union acknowledged its inferiority but when the reverse was the case.

> "The era of the most fervent belief in the aggressiveness of the Soviet Union did in fact last from about 1948, when America had acquired a sizeable stockpile of atomic bombs, to about 1956, when the Soviet stockpile also became quite large" (Professor Blackett, *New Statesman*, 5.12.59).

In fact, the alleged Soviet threat never existed, and that is why the West has no "intelligible *defence* policy". The policy was not for defence, but its opposite; both the strategy and the military preparations to sustain it were aggressive. On December 27th, 1959, the *Observer* noted:

> "The threat of war as the basis of diplomacy had begun to seem unreal as soon as Russia was clearly capable of effective nuclear retaliation.
>
> "In a year [1959] which began with a Soviet planet launched around the sun and which saw two successful moonshots, public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic was convinced that there was no future in simply threatening Russia."

In other words, the change in the balance of world forces, brought about by the tremendous Socialist advance, had undermined the NATO strategy. "Simply threatening Russia" was in fact the accepted approach of the United States and its allies throughout the cold war.

The last war, though won by an alliance between leading capitalist states and the solitary Socialist land, was in fact a defeat for capitalism, for imperialism. Capitalism was defeated in Eastern Europe, European Resistance movements developed into powerful movements for socialism in the West. In the East they carried the fight against Japanese imperialism over into the fight against American, Dutch, French and British imperialism. The whole world, it seemed, was moving Left. Imperialism was bound to resist this development.

Trying to put the Clock Back

Imperialist states resisted in their several ways and sought, under United States leadership, to resist it in concert, on a world scale, by means of various political and military alliances. On a world scale, each movement towards national independence and/or socialism was presented by Western propaganda as a move by the Soviet Union to extend its influence, to be met by threats of force and the use of force if necessary. This is the kernel of the policy of "containment" formulated by George Kennan in 1947, and represents the most "realistic" expression of Western strategy at that time.

A more ambitious expression of the same policy was the idea of "roll-back"—the threat and use of force to reduce the area of so-called Soviet influence. It seemed then that sole possession of the atomic bomb, plus large naval and air forces, plus widespread bases, would make this a practical policy.

But it proved a total failure. The Soviet Union remained unimpressed and visibly so. The march forward towards national independence and socialism continued, at least outside Western Europe. In Western Europe the peoples found that the alliance restricted their national independence and imposed an intolerable financial and moral burden on them.

To threaten to use the atomic bomb against a country which did not have it posed the prob-

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lem of when and in what circumstances it could be used. People in the West were quick to realise that if the atomic bomb were used against "military targets" in the Soviet Union it would in fact kill millions of Soviet people.

> "Once a nation pledges its safety to an absolute weapon it becomes emotionally necessary to believe in an absolute enemy" (Professor Blackett).

One or two leading civilians, like Priestley and Russell, now against the bomb, then found themselves able to justify the West's possession of it and its use on Moscow. But in fact, most people could not stomach it, however much they were invited to believe in the wickedness of the Soviet system and its supposed readiness to attack the West.

The all too visible reality of those days was not a warlike Soviet Union, but a warlike America. As Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, noted U.S. military expert, wrote in his *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*:

> "Our posture was bellicose enough to lend colour to Soviet peace offensives, but not sufficiently so to induce Soviet hesitations."

Western strategists in fact underestimated the capacity of the Soviet Union to stand up to blackmail. The Soviet Union responded to the policy of "simply threatening Russia" in two main ways. Politically it increased its efforts to arrest the arms race and thaw out the cold war, thereby appealing to the mass of the people throughout the world and to the uncommitted nations. Militarily it set to work to develop atomic weapons; increased its land forces and developed its submarine fleet.

The increased land forces were to provide reserves and manoeuvrability in face of atomic attack, and the submarine fleet was to neutralise the American task forces (the Soviet Union built no aircraft carriers) and to cut, if need be, the supply lines to the American chain of bases. (There are still, to this day, however, active and retired admirals who believe that the Soviet submarine's function is to deprive the Englishman's breakfast table of Danish bacon or New Zealand butter in the hope of breaking his morale.)

The Soviet A-Bomb

United States experts thought that the Soviet Union might develop one atomic bomb somewhen between 1950 and 1957 and even by then might not have a delivery system. Admiral Nimitz of the American Navy even refused to believe that any rocket, whether Soviet or American, could be fired more than 1,000 miles.

Many did not believe in the Soviet A-bomb when the Soviet Union announced it. But its existence was real enough to them during the war in Korea. Along with U.S. fear of the result on world opinion, of once again using atomic weapons in Asia, this was the reason why finally the U.S. did not use its nuclear power.

General Bradley thought Korea was the "wrong war at the wrong place, at the wrong time and with the wrong enemy." The atomic bluff was called.

By 1953, when the Americans thought of using the atomic bomb and the strategic air force to "roll back" the Vietnamese forces, they were stopped by public opinion (testified to in Eden's *Memoirs*), fear of Soviet reprisals and uncertainty whether it would help the French forces anyway.

From this time, Soviet capacity to produce and deliver nuclear weapons grew, and with it grew Western "reluctance to engage in all-out war" (Kissinger). The show-down (to paraphrase Kissinger) was deferred.

By 1956, General Maxwell Taylor, Chief of U.S. Army Staff, was attacking those who thought only in terms of an all-out war, and proposing so-called limited wars for the West's aggressive aims. He wrote an article for the American quarterly, *Foreign Affairs,* in which he said that in a war Soviet troops "would soon be locked in close combat with the NATO armies in such a way as to restrict the employment of atomic weapons against them". The American State Department vetoed this and other passages and the article did not appear. (Taylor won in the end, however, by retiring last year and publishing it in his book *The Uncertain Trumpet*.) The passages offended the State Department because: "It is seriously questioned whether the statement about restrictions to the use of atomic weapons in relation to the NATO armies should be stated in public."

In November 1959, Lt.-General Cowley, speaking to the Royal United Services Institution in London, summarised the dilemma for the West as a result of socialist strength thus:

> "Unless we bring the nuclear deterrent into play we are bound to be beaten, and if we do bring it into play we are bound to commit suicide."

In his *The Uncertain Trumpet,* General Taylor attacked the "great fallacy" of massive nuclear retaliation, and called for the build-up and modernisation of conventional forces.

On August 28th, 1959, the American Senate Foreign Relations Committee set two priorities: an effective defence against the long-range missile and the development of conventional forces. General Cowley thinks:

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> "The British contribution . . . can be far more useful in other directions than in producing weapons which are only useful because of their threat and which can only be threatened in very exceptional circumstances." He asks for *tactical* atomic weapons which would "impose such a threat to any large concentrations of troops necessary before an attack that the advantages of superior numbers would be counter-balanced".

Professor Blackett says:

> "Clearly the only sensible military policy for the West would be to attempt as soon as possible to match more nearly the strength of the Soviet land forces in Europe and to provide the equipment and training for land war both with and without tactical weapons."

"Catching Up" with the Soviet Union

Last November the Army League, a group of officers chaired by Colonel Tufton Beamish, Tory M.P., and John Strachey, Labour M.P., issued a booklet *The British Army in the Nuclear Age* which said:

> "The general Western aim . . . should be to achieve something like parity with the Communists at each of the three levels of force: (*a*) in terms of major thermo-nuclear power, (*b*) in terms of tactical atomic warfare, and (*c*) in terms of a conventional engagement of limited size and localised area. . . ."

On November 27th the *New York Herald Tribune* speculated:

> "The British Ministry of Defence is actively considering a cut in the nation's nuclear deterrent military programme . . . in order to provide an increase in the size and equipment of conventional forces."

Other newspapers hinted that with the departure of Duncan Sandys from the Defence Ministry the policy of building up Britain's nuclear air fleet and developing a British intermediate-range rocket (Blue Streak) would be modified and the new Defence Minister, Harold Watkinson, would do the job.

Almost at the same time, Mr. Watkinson was telling the Lord Mayor and other dignitaries at the Guildhall that: "We must be completely prepared to resist aggression by all the means at our command."

In the late autumn the advisory council of the Democratic National Committee in America set the objective of "catching up" with the Soviet Union in long-range missiles and conventional weapons. But on December 26th the same council's Science and Technology Committee urged the "total elimination of the major tools of sudden mass destruction", on the grounds that current policy was leading to an atomic war, not preventing it.

These views may be summarised in three groups. One suggests matching an alleged Soviet superiority in conventional forces and weapons; one suggests a drive on tactical weapons with the same objective; the third group—including Britain's Defence Minister—wants more of everything.

The Defence White Paper presented by Mr. Watkinson on February 16th, 1960, shows that this is the Macmillan Government's policy, with its increase of £115 million in the arms budget, to the enormous total of £1,630 million.

I have already argued that it is wrong to say that Soviet land forces outnumber those of NATO, but I would not expect the above-quoted experts to accept this, even when Mr. Khrushchov is cutting forces by one-third.

But whatever the strength of Soviet conventional forces the above policies would lead nowhere. They are still based on a short-sighted estimate of the Soviet Union. They ignore the fact that this is above all the age of technique, and conventional forces must be matched, not simply in numbers but in equipment. American experts told Congress this January that Soviet forces are superbly equipped. They are right, and the standards will be enhanced until disarmament renders them irrelevant.

The second group is apparently not aware that Soviet forces are equipped with tactical atomic weapons. They ignore General Taylor's remarks about the use of atomic weapons when opposing forces are locked in close combat.

The third view is based on "catching up" with the Soviet Union. Some experts think this can be done by 1964. So it could, perhaps, if Soviet science and technique would stand still.

No Solution for the West

No, whichever way the Western experts look at the problem they will find no solution. Their impotence lies in their seeking a military and political strategy which is completely outmoded by world political and economic developments.

The military strategy that serves imperialism is subject to the same contradictions which beset imperialism itself. The grand strategy of imperialism has been to arrest and drive back the anti-imperialist movement. The corresponding grand military strategy has been to threaten the centre and inspiration of that movement—the Soviet Union.

This has required unceasing development of atomic weapons, and delivery systems, the stationing of offensive units in bases throughout the world and above all the line-up of large military formations under NATO command in Western Europe.

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But Britain and France have required large ground forces to serve their own special imperialist aims in their colonies, and these have been given priority. France, supposed to commit four divisions to NATO, commits only two, using others in Algeria. Britain commits one-sixth of her ground forces to NATO, keeping the rest of her active forces as a strategic reserve for use in the colonies. This has meant that NATO forces are under the strength required for the grand strategy. The gap has been filled by building up the West German armed forces and West German industrial power.

This has enabled West German capitalism to use the grand strategy for its own ends, threatening the trade position of Britain and even America with its new-found strength.

Calling for larger British forces in Europe, the Army League says these would "encourage belief in the firmness of British intentions and reinforce British influence among members of the Common Market". To have forces in the colonies and larger forces in Europe means more men and more money. The Duncan Sandys policy was intended to save men and money by building a smaller regular force, thus meeting economic difficulties at home.

Imperialism's military strategy demands bases all over the world. Anti-imperialist developments threaten all these bases, notably in the Far and Middle East.

Further complications have arisen on the home front due to the nature of capitalism. In America huge combines, swollen with profits, compete for bigger and better military contracts. Seeking more power and profit, different groups boost the claims of different weapons, different methods, different Services.

Leading arms manufacturers today employ between seven and eight hundred retired officers who, according to one report, "spend too much time" at the Pentagon, badgering former colleagues for changes in policy leading to better contracts. From these rivalries stem much of the inter-Service squabbling which bedevils the American missile programme. The race for profit prevents the proper theoretical preparation for rocket experiments (after all, the firms are paid for rockets that fail as well as rockets that succeed)—hence the apparently aimless empiricism of the American research teams.

Soviet Strength

The nuclear military strategy which seemed to offer such advantages to imperialism has proved in the end to offer them not to imperialism but to its chosen enemy, the Soviet Union. With its great land mass, and its population density half that of the United States and one-tenth that of Britain, the Soviet Union is infinitely better placed to face the nuclear menace.

Concerned only with defending itself, the Soviet Union could say it would never be the first to use the bomb. The West, thinking in terms of an atomic-backed aggressive policy, could not say the same. Duncan Sandys said Britain would use it even if Soviet conventional forces only were in question in any war.

Socialist ownership of industry, the absence of private profit, gave its advantages too. Cruel as is the burden of the arms race, the Soviet arms budget has always required less money than the American to achieve comparable or better results. The absence of commercial pressure groups prevented Soviet rocket production from being hampered by rivalry. From the start Soviet rockets were under one command. Rockets were in fact a logical ultimate choice for the Soviet defence force. With an advanced industry and science, a weapon which could be used for normal scientific research, which represented an unlimited opportunity for scientific development, which would not be wasted in the event of disarmament, had obvious advantages.

The Soviet Union, with rockets, could face a world-wide attack, from bases entirely within its borders: no chain of overseas bases, no insoluble supply problems. The ability to think and plan ahead, to see the broad outline of developments between opposing forces in the world, enabled the Soviet Union to adapt its military policy systematically.

Western strategists, on the other hand, reacted to each new development, asking themselves, "Is this the time for the all-out test?" and finding every time that the answer was "no".

Having the ultimate aim of achieving material and spiritual abundance in the Soviet Union, and not of preventing colonial peoples from doing the same, Soviet policy could be conceived in defensive terms. The break-up of colonial empires which presented the West with more complex strategical problems had the reverse effect on the Soviet Union. Moroccan independence, Ceylonese independence, which robbed imperialism of two bases, for example, decreased the military pressure on the Soviet Union correspondingly. And the whole trend of world development is along these lines—along the path of history. Only policies which work with this trend can succeed, only military strategies which serve them are practicable.

The Only Way—Disarmament

The West's military policy has succeeded neither in its real aim of blackmailing the Soviet

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Union nor in its professed aim of defending Western countries. American experts do not expect in this decade to develop an adequate means of defence against the long-range missile. Their anti-missile missile, the Nike Zeus, is still far from the production stage.

Duncan Sandys said his policy was defence of bases rather than of civilian populations. Now even defence of bases is viewed as hardly practicable against missile attack. The Army League has "assumed that home defence involves no specific allocation of the Regular Army's resources". Indeed, though this be a bitter pill for strategists to swallow, there is no solution to the problem posed other than that offered by Mr. Khrushchov—complete disarmament.

Even generals must, to themselves, admit that for all its cost, the NATO military apparatus has no real value.

To contend that British forces in Europe meet the threat of growing German influence is nonsense. For those who contend this have allowed German troops in NATO to rise to a point where they outnumber both British and American forces and soon will outnumber their combined strengths. On top of this they want to give the German forces nuclear weapons.

Only a refusal to give the German forces these weapons, only all-round disarmament, can destroy the bogey created by the Western allies which now frightens them more than it frightens the "enemy". It is useless, too, for them to argue that armed forces in garrison in the colonies, in the form of a strategic reserve or "showing the flag", advance British influence in the world one jot.

The Soviet State Committee for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries has advanced "Soviet influence" more in Asia and Africa with low interest loans and grants than Western governments have advanced theirs with even greater expenditure on arms.

On a world scale there is only one way in which the West can obtain parity with the Soviet Union in rockets or other weapons, by agreeing with the Soviet Union to scrap them.

Public opinion throughout the difficult days of the cold war helped restrain the strategists from finding "the right war, at the right place, the right time and with the right enemy". Now it can enforce the solution to the present dilemmas of Western policy by winning the battle for disarmament.

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The Common Struggle of the British and Colonial Peoples

Kay Beauchamp

NO one could deny the impact that the sweeping advances of the African liberation movement are making in this country today. It has become a commonplace to call 1960 "Africa Year", and the first few months of the year have certainly lived up to the title, with the announcement of independence for the Belgian Congo in June, the Kenya Constitutional Conference, the controversy over the South African boycott and the tightrope walking of Mr. Macmillan during his African tour—to mention only a few of the new developments which have hit the headlines.

In this country, support for the struggles of the African people is growing, but not as rapidly as the situation requires. It is therefore opportune for us to examine the relation between our struggles here and the struggles of the colonial peoples.

How do these struggles affect the British Labour movement? The tradition of international working class solidarity is deep-rooted in Britain and as old as the Labour movement itself. It is based on the idea that the workers and oppressed peoples of all countries are fighting against the same enemy as we are.

The Common Enemy

Today one only has to look at a list of firms operating in the colonies to see that this is true. For instance the name of Taylor Woodrow is only too well known to building workers in this country, but it can also be seen on the construction jobs in Ghana, where Taylor Woodrow (Ghana) Ltd. have just got a contract worth £423,000 for road reconstruction, and in Nigeria, where Taylor Woodrow (Nigeria) Ltd. are to reconstruct Kano airport for £250,000. Glaxo Laboratories have just opened a factory for groundnut flour in Lagos, Nigeria, and are hoping to develop a "large and diversified business in food and pharmaceuticals in West Africa". In Bulawayo, Rhodesia, the Metal Box Company has bought 13 acres close to the Dunlop factory and is investing £400,000 to open and equip a new factory.

"The Oxo Cube continued to flourish", states the Liebig's Extract of Meat Company, declaring themselves very satisfied with their operations in East and Central Africa and announcing a profit of £2,106,000 before tax. Other large concerns active in Africa as well as here are: I.C.I., Imperial Tobacco, British Motor Corporation, General Electric, Unilevers, Royal Dutch Shell, to mention only a few.

A survey of 130 large companies carried out by the Institute of Economic Affairs noted that in 1958 these companies, who employed 1,413,000 workers in this country, also employed 308,000 workers overseas, and many of these will have been in the colonies.

A full examination of the interests of Tory M.P.s would show how many of them have interests in the colonies, but here are a few outstanding examples. Before he took office, Julian Amery was a Director of the British South Africa Company, which draws royalties from Rhodesian copper. Duncan Sandys was formerly a director of two West African gold mining companies, the Ashanti Goldfields and Bibiani. C. J. Holland-Martin is on the Standard Bank of South Africa, the Uganda Co., Nyasaland Railways, and many other companies. Sir. H. D'Avigdor-Goldsmid is on the East African Estates Company, and F. W. Harris on the East African subsidiaries of Marshall's Universal, which operates in Kenya.

Although many more facts could be given, I think these are sufficient to indicate that the same monopolists, and the Tory politicians who represent their interests, exploit both the colonial and the British people.

Now let us look at the stage reached both in Britain and in the colonial countries in the fight against the common enemy. In Britain, monopoly capitalism, drawing a great deal of its strength from the colonies is still strong, and although the wages and tenants' struggles and the fight for peace are developing, imperialist and reformist ideas are deeply rooted even among the workers, and the grip of the right wing on the Labour, trade union and Co-operative machine is still strong. On the other hand, especially in Africa, the peoples of the colonial and underdeveloped coun-

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tries are sweeping forward to new victories and are in the forefront of the struggle against imperialism. Their struggles are being fought against tremendous odds and the development is uneven but, nevertheless, the speed of advance is tremendous.

Today, therefore, it is more important than ever for the British people to aid the struggle of the colonial peoples, because it is they who represent the sharpest threat to the huge monopolies who hold both Britain and the colonies in their grip. We are also in a favourable position to do this because we have many democratic rights, the right to strike, to free speech, to demonstrate and to march, which are denied the colonial peoples.

Solidarity

Our solidarity can take two main forms, on the one hand the mobilising of opinion against the colonial policy of the Government, and on the other various forms of practical aid. The working class and the Labour movement must naturally be the main force in this solidarity movement, but many other sections of the people can be drawn into the struggle as well.

Ever since its formation forty years ago, the Communist Party has constantly striven, both by its own propaganda and activities and by working with other organisations, to show the British people what imperialism means, and to aid the struggles of the colonial peoples. Our efforts have been directed to bringing wider sections of the people into the struggle against imperialism.

In recent years there has been a big change in the attitude of the Labour movement. For instance, in 1958 very few annual conferences of trade unions passed resolutions on colonial questions. But in 1959 ten of the big trade union conferences passed resolutions, either on Nyasaland or on Tory colonial policy in general, and many more had resolutions on the agenda which they did not reach.

The change is shown most markedly in the growth of the Movement for Colonial Freedom and the strengthening of its policy and activity. This organisation is now backed by over 100 M.P.s, thirteen national trade unions and over 900 Labour Parties, trade union branches, Co-operative Parties and Women's Guilds. The objects of the Movement for Colonial Freedom (M.C.F.) are to work in support of the right of all peoples to independence (self-government and self-determination), and freedom from external. political, economic or military domination; the genuine application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and the replacement of imperialism by international co-operation, including technical and economic aid, between free partners.

During 1959 the M.C.F. together with the Committee of African Organisations, carried out a great deal of activity and solidarity with the peoples of Nyasaland, the Rhodesias, Kenya and South Africa. A deep impression has been made on Labour gatherings by the speeches of Kanjama Chiume and Joshua Nkomo and other African leaders. The M.C.F. is now asking British trade unionists to sign a message of greeting to the Founding Congress of the African Federation of Trade Unions taking place in Casablanca, Morocco, in May, and the first 500 to sign this message were engineers lobbying their employers on wages in Tothill Street on January 26th.

The vicious *apartheid* policy of the South African Government has aroused great indignation in this country. Chief Luthuli and other South African leaders pay tribute to the work done by Christian Action over the last three years in raising funds for the victims of the Treason Trial. The reaction to the banishment of Mrs. Mafekeng, mother of eleven children, and president of the South African Canning Workers' Union, was so great that it brought immediate protest from the General Council of the T.U.C.

The boycott movement started by the South African National Congress last August was supported from its inception by the Communist Party, the *Daily Worker,* the Movement for Colonial Freedom, the Committee of African Organisations and a number of Labour, Liberal and other progressive people. Imports of South African tinned fruit fell by £2 million in 1959. The call of the National Council of Labour on January 19th this year for a boycott month from March 1st-31st has met with widespread support, but has also aroused considerable controversy. The call is for individual action, and the Co-operative Union has advised retail societies not to operate a ban on South African goods in their shops. This attitude has been opposed by many co-operators; the South Suburban Co-operative Society has already decided to ban South African goods, and a petition to requisition a special meeting to discuss the boycott has been signed by members of the London Co-operative Society.

The question of industrial action, although not recommended by the T.U.C., has aroused considerable discussion in Covent Garden market and other enterprises. On January 17th, 250 delegates from London organisations attended the boycott conference, and the London Boycott Campaign Committee is now encouraging the setting up of borough Boycott Committees.

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Solidarity in Strikes

A great weakness in the movement at present is the lack of solidarity with African workers on strike. Ever since the magnificent solidarity of the Australian workers who in 1888 sent £30,000 to the London dockers striking for a tanner an hour there has been in all capitalist countries a deep-rooted tradition of solidarity with workers on strike. Yet this tradition does not seem to extend to solidarity with African trade unionists on strike. In December last thousands of railwaymen in Kenya and Uganda were on strike for some weeks, demanding a living wage. Yet neither the British railway unions nor any other unions to my knowledge sent messages of support, let alone gave the financial aid that British workers were so generously given in 1888 and to an even greater extent during the miners' lock-out and General Strike of 1926.

The main responsibility for this lies at the door of the right-wing leaders of the T.U.C., who not only do not give the call for solidarity, but use the money given by British workers to the colonial Solidarity Fund to back up unrepresentative trade unions in the colonies against militant trade unions.[1]

The founding of the African Federation of Trade Unions will raise the question of whether this fund should not be paid direct to the Federation to ensure its control by the Africans themselves, instead of the two main forces in the I.C.F.T.U. who are at present at loggerheads over the question of Africa—the American A.F.L. and C.I.O. and the British T.U.C.

In the meantime contact between indivdual unions here and in the colonies can be most valuable. Some time ago U.S.D.A.W. invited a representative of the Northern Rhodesian trade unions to their annual conference, and his speech made a deep impression. Opportunities of this kind are much greater now that so many African leaders are coming to this country and at a meeting in the House of Commons the other day Mr. Mayanza Chona, of the Northern Rhodesian United National Independence Party, said that he had come to this country mainly to find out the reactions of ordinary people and was most willing to speak at meetings, because that would give him a chance to test opinion in this country on Central African Federation.

At present the main emphasis in the fight of the African people is for human rights and dignity, for democratic liberties and political sovereignty, but as they gain their political independence new problems arise. This is sharply illustrated by Ghana. Political independence was gained three years ago, but Ghana is meeting with considerable difficulty in changing its economy and only 5 per cent of the foreign trade is in the hands of Africans.

The question arises as to how such countries will succeed in throwing off the economic, financial and military shackles of imperialism, developing their own basic industry, a balanced economy, and raising the standard of living of the whole population. There is no doubt that the effect of trade and aid from the socialist countries will become an increasingly important factor in its process. Also as their industry develops the working class in these newly independent countries will grow in numbers and strength, and the question of class solidarity between them and British workers will become increasingly important.

Fight Against Imperialist Ideas

Although, as I have shown, solidarity with the colonial peoples is growing, it is held back by deep-rooted imperialist ideas among the British people and even among British workers. Therefore a sharp fight is needed against these ideas and I want to examine some of those which are most widespread.

Racial prejudice

Capitalism breeds racial prejudice and promotes racial discrimination. The idea that colonial peoples, and especially coloured people, are inferior has become deeply rooted among British people from the days of the slave trade, and has been growing through three centuries of colonialism. It is obviously of benefit to colonisers to regard their victims as inferior, and as early as 1550 a Spanish slave-trader attempted to justify slavery by asserting that American Indians were "as different from Spaniards as cruelty is from kindness, and as monkeys are from men". These ideas still persist in their most virulent form among the supporters of *apartheid* in South Africa.

It has also suited the ruling class to fan racial prejudice in order to divert the working class from the struggle against its real enemies, and the Nazis used and still use anti-Semitism for this purpose. In the same way Mosley is stirring up hatred against West Indians in this country in order to make a political comeback. These people find fertile ground for racial prejudice because many workers who suffer from bad housing or fear unemployment find it easier to blame the coloured family down the road than to understand and tackle the real cause of their grievances.

These racial prejudices have to be fought, both by fact and argument and by developing joint

[1] See Idris Cox: "Queer Concepts of Solidarity", *World News*, March 8th, 1958.

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struggle. Although only a small minority of British people accept the far-fetched racialist "theories" of the fascists, probably most British people have some mistaken ideas which feed the notion of superior and inferior races.

In this connection the series of booklets published by U.N.E.S.C.O. on "The Race Question in Modern Science", and available from H.M. Stationery Office, would repay much wider study. It is impossible in this article to go into all the scientific evidence which they provide to show that there is no scientific basis for racial or colour prejudice.

However I should like to make just two quotations from them. One is from Professor Dunn, who writes:

> "Biologically, then, men belong to one mating circle, and share in a common pool of genes. There is thus no biological justification for race hatred or prejudice. One should be careful to recognise this prejudice for what it is, and not try to conceal it behind a 'scientific' rationalisation."

The other is from Professor Comas who asserts that:

> "All the evidence of biology, anthropology, evolution and genetics demonstrates that racial discrimination on grounds of colour is a myth without the slightest scientific warrant, and hence that the supposed 'racial inferiority of coloured peoples' is untrue. It is unfavourable enviromental, political and social-economic factors which alone keep these groups at their present level."

Today, when African leaders like Mr. Tom Mboya are showing themselves more than a match for their questioners on TV and radio, one might think it unnecessary to bring forward these arguments. But unfortunately prejudice dies hard, and people only too often think with two minds. The other day an active and militant trade unionist said to me: "But of course these 'Darkies' have never contributed anything to human culture"—although he had just bought a ticket for the *Daily Worker* Anniversary Meeting at the Albert Hall largely because Paul Robeson will be there.

The idea of the inferiority of the coloured peoples is fed by the fact that imperialism has deliberately maintained their countries as sources of raw materials and primary products. In this connection Basil Davidson in his book *Old Africa Rediscovered* has done a service by showing that the disparity between the social, economic and cultural level of Africa and Europe only dates from the industrial revolution. African civilisation is, in fact, older than ours, and in the Middle Ages and even up to the eighteenth century, travellers were impressed not by the "barbarism" of Africa but by its wealth and the diversity of its trade and culture. The trade route across Northern Africa from Nigeria to the Red Sea was in use over 2,000 years ago. It is only in the last twenty years that archaeologists and historians have really started to study the history of Africa, and much of this history still remains to be uncovered. On page 23 Basil Davidson writes:

> "What this new outline suggests is something neither 'inferior' nor 'mysterious' but a story of success and failure, disaster, resurgence and fulfilment, which is no different in its essence than the story of any of the major families of man. The rediscovery of Africa goes indeed towards the recognition of the essential unity of the people of Africa with the people of the rest of the world."

It is modern capitalism—which because of special geographical and economic conditions developed first in Europe—that has enabled the ruling class of these countries to rob, plunder and dominate older civilisations.[2] Once capitalist exploitation has been ended such disparities are quickly overcome as is shown by the way in which the most backward areas of the old Tsarists' "prisonhouse of nations" have developed since the Russian revolution and by the way in which the Chinese —formerly dubbed by many "a nation of coolies" —have amazed the whole world by their progress. Once the African people get the chance their progress will be no less spectacular, and the more thoroughly we expose racial prejudice the more effectively we shall be able to help them.

However, racial prejudice is countered by actions as well as by words. The class solidarity and militancy shown by West Indians in the bus strike of 1958 did more than many arguments to break down racial prejudice among transport workers. Wherever Tenants' Associations include both white and coloured families it is difficult for fascists to stir up race hatred. Similarly the more British workers are won for support for the boycott of South African goods, the demand for the release of Banda and Kenyatta and the message to the Federation of African Trade Unions, the easier it will be to undermine the imperialist ideas which are holding back the common struggle.

Finally on this question of racial and colour prejudice, it is necessary to remind white people that in this modern age, the peoples of the world are more interdependent than ever before and it is certainly not in the interests of white people to

[2] The reasons why capitalism developed first in Western Europe are dealt with by M. H. Dobb in his book *Studies in the Development of Modern Capitalism.*

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antagonise the coloured people, who form three-fifths of the world's population.

Can we do without Colonies?

Both the capitalists and the right-wing Labour leaders have always maintained that colonies are essential to Britain's prosperity. Even today, the main idea running through Labour's *Economic Policy for the Colonies* is that the British people should make a sacrifice in order to invest 1 per cent of their national income in the colonies in order to assist the colonial peoples. Even some Labour M.P.s who consider themselves "Left" tell British workers that if they want freedom for the colonies they must be prepared to face a drop in their own standard of living.

What is the real position? Is the empire a benefit or a burden to the British people? Has it ever been of benefit?

Cecil Rhodes regarded imperialism as necessary to prevent civil war in Britain, and the development of the empire certainly gave a new lease of life to the British capitalists and enabled them to delay socialist revolution. Today, when one-third of the world is socialist, the oldest working class movement has not yet achieved the socialist aims of some of the Chartist leaders of a hundred years ago. Although Marx and Engels developed their theory, wrote the *Communist Manifesto* in Britain and drew a great deal from the experience of the British working class, we have not yet achieved socialism.

By exploiting vast new areas, opening up new sources of raw materials and exploiting the colonial peoples, the British ruling class were able to buy off the more skilled, better organised and more vocal sections of the British working class. They were able to corrupt many working class leaders and maintain the domination of the right wing because super profits from the colonies gave them the power to manoeuvre. Nevertheless, *the majority* of the working class lived in appalling conditions, and in the heyday of British imperialism between 1910 and 1914, Sir Leo Chiozza Money in his book *Riches and Poverty* calculated that out of a total population of 43 million, 38 million people fell into the category of poor people and 13 million of these were on the verge of hunger.

Seeing the contrast between living standards in Britain and in the colonies today, many people assume that the British working class as a whole has benefited from imperialism. I think the truth is that both colonial and British people suffer from imperialism, although it is obvious that the colonial people suffer much more. The appallingly low standards in the colonies are due to the way in which imperialism has kept these countries as sources of raw materials and prevented the development of modern industry, while destroying their traditional economy and using armed force to drive the peasants from the land and into the plantations, and arrest, imprisonment and police intimidation to hamper the development of their trade unions.

On the other hand capitalism in its own interests was forced to create a large skilled and educated working class in this country. Over two centuries of struggle the British working class has won the right to organise and many other valuable democratic liberties. Yet despite the fact that improvements in the social services and in the standards of living in Britain have been won through working-class struggle the exploitation of the British working class has not lessened but increased. The gap between what the workers receive and what they produce is even greater today than ever before.

The British people have also paid for the cost of empire in two world wars, in colonial wars from the Boer War to the war in Malaya, now in its twelfth year, and which has cost the British taxpayer £1,000 million to date. They have shared and still share with the colonial people the cost of maintaining British domination by armies of occupation throughout the world, and education and other social services are slashed to pay for the huge and increasing expenditure on arms.

Whatever doubts may remain about the past, it should be clear that today the whole future of the British people is threatened by the continued existence of imperialism. Because of their fear of socialism, and their determination to hang on to the colonies, the monopolists have accepted American overlordship, have leased British land for American H-bomb bases and have put the British people in deadly peril of annihilation in a nuclear war.

All this is taking place in the face of the unconquerable struggle of the colonial peoples for political, financial and economic independence. The era of imperialism is doomed, the choice before the British people is either to side with the imperialists and pay the cost of endless exhausting struggles to maintain colonial domination or to work together with the colonial peoples to bring an end to imperialism.

Yet the sceptics still ask how 50 million people can exist on this island without an empire. The answer is clearly given in our Communist programme, *The British Road to Socialism*. The *only* possible future for the British people lies in voluntary and mutually beneficial economic and cultural co-operation between Britain and the rest

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of the world, including the former colonial countries.

Once this position is grasped and fully accepted there need be no fear about Britain's future. When the underdeveloped countries have full control of their own resources, British industry can be kept busy for generations in providing them with the machine tools and manufactured goods they will need to carry through the industrialisation of their countries. Trade between Britain and these countries will expand vastly as their standard of living rises. At the same time a socialist Britain will build up a much more balanced economy, with better use of our own resources.

Of course this means that the British people will have to deal with the small group of monopolists who dominate this country at present. But the important point to understand is that every victory of the colonial peoples undermines the strength of the British monopolists and so helps our struggle against them. Thus the struggle against imperialism is for the British people an essential part of their struggle for socialism.

Lenin and Stalin showed that imperialism, by drawing the whole world into its orbit, brought together the struggle of the workers in the metropolitan countries for socialism, and the colonial peoples' struggle for independence.

In summing up the Leninist theses on the "National Problem", Stalin gave ten points of which the following, put very briefly [*Leninism*, by J. Stalin, page 54], are the ones which concern us most in this connection:

(i) The colonies and dependent countries constitute a huge reserve and great source of strength for finance capital in the handful of imperialist countries who (up to November 1917) exploited the whole world; (ii) the colonies and dependent countries were already starting to take the path to liberation and this would inevitably lead to the crisis of world capitalism; (iii) the interests of the working class in the imperialist countries and the national liberation movement in the colonies call for the merging of their struggles into a common front against the common enemy—imperialism; (iv) this common front is impossible unless the workers in the imperialist countries aid the struggles of the colonial peoples and steadfastly work for the right of all nations to self-determination and independence.

Unfortunately, because of the strength of reformism in Britain the common interests have not been fully understood, and what is objectively a common struggle has not become a conscious struggle waged by the whole of the Labour movement, although the revolutionary section of the movement has consistently striven for this.

In the Russian Revolution, because of the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, the struggles of the workers, peasants and colonial peoples of the former Russian Empire were merged into one common struggle with a common strategy and tactics. This led to the victory of the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, and the solving of the national problem because it is a voluntary union in which every nation has autonomy and the right of secession, and each nation, large or small, has equal representation in the Council of Nationalities whose consent must be obtained to all laws.

Today, in the British Empire and Commonwealth, the position is entirely different because British imperialism, although considerably weakened, is still strong and the right-wing leadership still dominates the British Labour movement; and in most of the colonies, the liberation movement is led by the national bourgeoisie and not by the working class. Therefore, although objectively the British and colonial peoples are involved in a common struggle and every victory of one aids the other, the common consciousness and leadership is to a large extent lacking. Therefore the problem is how to strengthen and develop the understanding among British people of the common aims and interests and prove to the colonial peoples that they have allies within the imperialist countries.

Colonial Solidarity Strengthens the British Labour Movement

Solidarity with the colonial peoples strengthens the British workers' fight in more ways than one. The most important, of course, is that it helps the colonial peoples to weaken our main enemy, but it has other good effects as well.

One of the biggest weaknesses of the movement in this country is disunity and the bans and proscriptions by which the right wing seeks to isolate the Communists. It is no accident that the strongest and most consistent broad organisations which include Labour people, trade unionists, co-operators and Communists, are those concerned with the colonial struggle. The Movement for Colonial Freedom is outstanding, but there are many others, including the Committee of African Organisations, the South African Freedom Association, and the Boycott Campaign Committee.

At the boycott conference, Tories, Liberals, Labour people and Communists were all present and spoke in the discussion, although the platform included all parties except the Communist Party.

There are two reasons why it is possible to get a wider unity on colonial issues than on most other questions. One reason is that over the last

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few years a policy, at least on all the immediate issues, has gradually come to be adopted by large sections of Labour people, many trade unions and co-operative societies, which is completely in line with the demands of the colonial peoples themselves. On these issues the Communist Party has no difference with other sections, although some of them would not fully support the perspective of our programme, *The British Road to Socialism*. This means that there is an agreed programme on which wide sections can co-operate.

The other reason why it is more difficult for the right wing to prevent united action on colonial issues is that the bans and proscriptions which have been imposed in the British Labour movement in varying degrees ever since 1923 have no meaning for the colonial peoples. They simply say that they are ready to work with all those who support their cause, and anyone who tries to oppose this eminently reasonable proposition cannot help appearing rather foolish.

In the course of developing solidarity with the colonial peoples, the British working class changes itself, because this struggle undermines imperialist ideas and reformist illusions. Instead of "We've never had it so good", Macmillan was met by "We've never had it so bad" when he went to South Africa, and that is true for colonial peoples everywhere. Once people here have become aware of the appalling conditions and crying injustices in the colonies and try to do something about them, they begin to see the need for really radical change, and are ready to think more deeply about the need for socialism.

Colonial solidarity helps to develop a wider unity of all those who are against the policies of the most reactionary circles of monopoly capitalism. On many issues it is possible to get the support of the Liberals, and even some Tories are critical of the Government's colonial policy. The Bow Group have opposed Central African Federation, and in the Oxford Union many young Tories supported the motion for the release of Dr. Banda during the debate when Mr. Macmillan was present.

Many who are most fervent in their support of the colonial peoples are very suspicious of anyone whose support is based on moral grounds. They stress that it is in the interests of the British people to support the colonial peoples, and describe anyone who is actuated simply by a sense of injustice as "paternalistic". Of course colonial people correctly object to anything in the nature of charity and point out that their liberation is as much in our interests as theirs. However, the hatred of injustice and solidarity with the heroic struggles of those fighting for freedom has been an important factor throughout history.

It was just 100 years ago that because of their hatred of slavery Lancashire textile workers strongly supported the Northern States in the American Civil War and prevented the British Government from importing cotton from the South, although this meant unemployment and semi-starvation for themselves and their families.

I am convinced that today the heroic struggles of the African people against tremendous odds—like the South African women who march with their babies on their backs facing police intimidation and imprisonment, the deep conviction and sense of human dignity with which leaders like Chief Luthuli present their case—have a tremendous appeal to all those in all sections of the population who value justice and freedom.

In conclusion, then, the struggle of the colonial peoples for freedom is an inseparable part of our own struggle against the Tories and monopoly capitalism for peace and socialism. Every victory they win aids us and by helping them we are strengthening our struggle. There are many difficulties to be overcome if the British Labour movement is to use its full strength to aid this struggle, but awareness of the need to do this is growing, and we must use all our efforts to speed up the process.

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Nationalisation and Social Ownership

Jack Dunman

MR. COUSINS was correct in saying that while you can have nationalisation without socialism, you cannot have socialism without nationalisation. If the fight for retaining nationalisation in the aims of the Labour Party is lost, it will put the Labour movement back forty years, when socialism was the creed of a number of small bodies, but not of any of the mass organisations.

Gaitskell and his friends are working as hard as they know how to secure changes in the Labour Party Constitution so that it will not conflict, even in words, with their own philosophy, which is basically the preservation of capitalism. It would be unwise to assume that they lack the cunning to lay dangerous traps for their opponents.

One of Gaitskell's favourite lines is that there is more than one form of social ownership. Nationalisation is not the only form; another one, he suggests, is his proposal that the state should go into the market and buy shares in various capitalist concerns. This proposal has been adequately examined elsewhere. The idea of using it to gain control of any sector of the economy has been specifically repudiated by its supporters; it is, of course, nothing but a proposal for the perpetuation of capitalism.

Disgust at this hollow fraud naturally predisposes many Socialists to reject also the thesis that was used to introduce it.

"Social Ownership"

This is precisely one of the traps to avoid. "Social ownership" is a broader concept than "nationalisation". The common definition of socialism has always been the *public ownership* (and I do not think that here "public" has a different meaning from social) of the means of production etc. The aims of the Communist Party begin with "to achieve a Socialist Britain in which the means of production, distribution, and exchange will be *socially owned*" [my italics.] The statement, "Nationalisation is not the only form of social ownership", is not a shocking right-wing deviation, but a vital piece of Leninist theory, without which the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. and elsewhere would have been impossible.

All the socialist countries have consciously and deliberately preferred the co-operative form to a nationalised form for the greater part of their agriculture; and in many cases agriculture was at first by far the largest sector of their economy. There also are, and always have been, substantial co-operative sectors in retail distribution; in the Soviet Union these are now being developed in the towns as well as in the countryside, to which they had previously been restricted. Co-operatives organise handicrafts and house-building among many other activities.

Lenin and Stalin were often at pains to explain the co-operative as an alternative form of social ownership. And the Soviet *Text-Book of Political Economy* (1957) states (p. 513, English translation): "In the first phase of Communism social or socialist property exists in two forms: (1) state property and (2) co-operative and collective farm property".

Such an approach was absolutely indispensable in the situation which the Soviet leaders faced. In order to feed the people, and provide a secure economic basis for industrialisation, large-scale mechanised methods and techniques had to be introduced into agriculture, with the utmost possible speed. And the human material, which was also the big majority of the whole population, was a mass of illiterate and backward peasants, conditioned to believe that their individual economic salvation lay simply in owning a little land, or a little more land, of their very own.

Any attempt to "nationalise" farming would have ended quickly in complete disaster. The development of co-operation was the brilliant solution, necessary both for mechanisation and for enabling the peasants to adopt collective methods in forms acceptable to themselves, and thus go over, by stages, to the collective outlook. Pooling "their" land resolved the contradiction. The broad principle has been followed in all socialist countries, with differences arising from national characteristics. But the "co-operative" farms of Czechoslovakia are basically the same as the "collective" farms of the Soviet Union.

This was the historical development. But it would be a mistake to regard the co-operative form simply as a concession to the backward mentality of peasants, due to be transformed as soon as possible

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into some "higher" form—a "nationalised" form as dogmatists might claim.

It appears that the Soviet leaders do visualise some coming together of the organisational forms of the "collectives" and the state (orthodox nationalised) farms; but exactly where they will meet is not clear. But it is clear that a simple going over of the collective to the state form is not contemplated; and it is very significant that the latest important change has been that the machine and tractor stations ("nationalised") have been encouraged to *sell* their tractors and other machinery to the ("co-operative") collectives. The tendency seems to be for the role of the co-operative to expand as an economic concern, while the vestiges of concession to private property (the private plots and livestock) decrease.

Application to Britain

What significance has this for Britain?

It would be absurd, of course, to copy mechanically measures and analyses made by the Soviet people, and apply them here without regard to different circumstances. Our agriculture, for example, is a capitalist industry, at the opposite pole from peasant agriculture in pre-revolutionary Russia.

But it would also be very foolish to ignore the general attitude which Soviet experience has arrived at. After forty years of Soviet power, and all the tremendous advances which have been made, the Soviet people have decided to take important measures such as the above to increase the weight of the co-operative sector of their economy, also illustrated by encouraging retail co-operatives to return to the towns, alongside the nationalised state shops. It is surely not going too far in the direction of dogmatic copying, if we, in our own different circumstances in Britain, make a new examination of the role of co-operation in an economy based on social ownership; and that at the very least we refrain from precipitate action in removing from the co-operative sector activities and enterprises which have long been established. We shall return to this point in our conclusion.

The very strength and long history of the Co-operative movement in Britain, especially in retail trade, should mean that we have a very powerful asset in building socialism. There are also here well-established forms of municipal ownership, especially in public transport, housing and education.

Now, to go back to Gaitskell: if he had been stressing "other forms" in the interest of extending the role of the Co-operative movement, or of advocating new forms of municipal enterprise, he would have deserved attention. But he was not; he was clearly thinking only of share-buying.

There is nothing in the Labour Party's policy statements or in their general approach to suggest that they are interested in extending, or even examining the possibility of extending, municipal enterprise in any important respect; in practice they often discourage it. They have never, for example, made any real fight for the maintenance of house-building as a municipal service.

As for the Co-operative movement, the Co-operative press has been filled throughout the whole of the period of discussion of policy with complaints, sometimes loud, sometimes querulous, that co-operation was being neglected in the Labour Party's "New Thinking". And when the New Thinking appeared in print, it seemed that those responsible were hardly aware of the existence of the Co-operative movement. The sum total of the consideration which it got in *Industry and Society* was:

> "On these matters, Labour Party policy has always been flexible. Thus, public ownership has been extended not only through the nationalisation of industry but, in many important fields, through the expansion of municipal enterprise and through the continuing growth of the Co-operative movement. These agencies have played a welcome and important part in our plans and will continue to do so in future."

And later, after some figures showing the size of the movement:

> "Thus co-operative ownership helps to check great inequalities in the ownership of wealth and to promote widespread small savings throughout the community. These are valuable services. But, in spite of its past success, the share of total capital resources controlled by the Co-operative movement is in fact small. Taking full account of its future possibilities, the Co-operative movement cannot be expected by itself to make an adequate contribution to the diffusion of private wealth. It is rather in its own main tasks of pioneering democracy in industry and in creating a new and more efficient distributive system, that the Co-operative movement has a major part to play."

Attitude of the Co-operative Leadership

The situation is all the more serious because the present Co-operative leadership is itself in no way interested in socialism or in the extension of social ownership with any broad idea of social change, but merely concerned with its own narrow trading interests, like any capitalist concern; and that, alas! not very urgently.

This is illustrated by the dispute with the National Union of Mineworkers, when the union proposed the nationalisation of coal distribution. There is no tradition of consultation between the different wings of the Labour movement on such questions, or any role played by the National Council of Labour; and the Co-operative movement responded by a violent attack on the Union, and on the very idea

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that any section whatever of coal distribution should be nationalised. In order to preserve their own 16 per cent of the business, they were prepared to fight vigorously for the remaining 84 per cent to be left in private profit-making hands! Neither side seem to have considered a common sense approach based partly on nationalisation and partly on the Co-operative movement, which need not exclude experiments with local authority control; or with national control, using the co-operatives as local agents. A bigger example of the same problem occurs in insurance, where it is said that Co-operative opposition prevented the last Labour Government from proceeding with the mutualisation of some sectors of insurance.

The Co-operative attitude in both cases gives practical expression to a theory which has been consciously developed by reactionary Co-operative theorists, that, "Co-operation in all its forms belongs to free economy. It languishes in a controlled one" (A Co-operative College tutor, writing in the *Co-operative College Magazine*, 1952).

In practice, the right-wing co-operators, in their jealous concern for their own sector, are inclined to resist almost any extension of nationalisation; and their attitude and arguments give powerful aid and comfort to all the Tory and big business opponents of it.

Thus, in the Central Executive's Report to the 1958 Congress, we read:

> "Similarly, the movement would oppose the indiscriminate nationalisation of flour milling *or any other industry or trade in which there is a distributive Co-operative sector* operating efficiently in service to the consumer." [My italics.]

An Alternative Outlook

These doctrines are uncongenial to old style co-operators, who continue to believe that the steady growth of the Co-operative movement will ultimately achieve, or play a part in achieving, a collective economy. Whether they think of this as "socialism" or "the Co-operative Commonwealth" is not of great importance. But their lack of class analysis, and of fundamental theory, makes them incapable of successfully defending their ideals.

Marxists, and those within the Labour Party who are fighting for socialism, have a big responsibility for clarifying these issues.

First, while avoiding the reaction to Gaitskellism of maintaining that nationalisation is the only form of social ownership, they must recognise the many weaknesses of nationalisation as established by the Labour movement in 1945, and develop a positive understanding of socialist nationalisation as explained in *The British Road to Socialism*. An uncritical attitude plays into the hands of the out-and-out opponents.

Second, they must begin to examine the part that can be played in a Socialist Britain by municipal enterprise, and by co-operation in its various forms. This task has never been adequately done, although the general lines have been suggested in the *British Road*, where we read:

> "But the owners of smaller enterprises, small shopkeepers and traders, as well as co-operative concerns, should go on as before; they will be freed from restrictions imposed on them by the monopolists and they will benefit from the rising turnover resulting from the new conditions." And again: "Over-centralisation in the administration of nationalised industries must be avoided by the transfer of suitable enterprises to local or regional authorities or to co-operative organisations."

The role of the Co-operative movement is of special interest because of its bearing on the problem of socialising sectors of the economy in which small-scale organisation persists.

Agriculture is the classic example; in all the socialist countries, co-operation has been the main form of socialisation, with state farming occupying a smaller sector. In Britain, where capitalist agriculture is so highly developed, and the majority of people occupied in the industry are wage-earning proletarians, the state sector might well be larger, and possibly even predominant. But for the farmers, certainly the 180,000 who employ no labour, and quite possibly for others, excluding only the largest, the extension of co-operation is clearly the way forward and has always been recognised as such. In certain parts of the country, where small farming predominates, it might be the chief form.

Retail distribution is the chief and best known field of co-operation in Britain; indeed to many people it is the only one. It is characterised by a large co-operative sector, and, despite the rapid growth of big business in the form of the multiple shops, a vast number of very small enterprises persist. It is hardly conceivable that in the advance to socialism, these would be "taken over" and centralised in some national apparatus. Certain activities need to be examined to see if they would fit in better with some national or local organisation; for example it has sometimes been suggested that milk distribution should be municipalised. But in general, it is hardly likely that the main body of distribution would be taken away from the Co-operative movement, and much more likely that the co-operative sector might be increased by the taking over of some of the huge enterprises through which monopoly is getting itself organised in retail trade. This was dealt with in *The British Road to Socialism:*

> "The Co-operative movement, like the trade unions, has a vital part to play in building a Socialist Britain. It can be an important means, within the

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national production plan, for organising the supply and distribution of consumer goods to meet rising standards of living. . . . Side by side with co-operative enterprise, state and municipal trading, as well as private trading in the early stages, can provide friendly competition and a mutual check on efficiency."

Co-operative Union Executive's Policy

As a further example of the difficulties which the right-wing leaders of the Co-operatives create for themselves and for the rest of the Labour movement, the Co-operative Union Executive stated in its report to the 1959 Congress:

> "Whilst the Central Executive could agree, as suggested to them, that there should be reaffirmation of the Co-operative movement as a form of social ownership complementary to other forms of social ownership to be encouraged by the next Labour Government, the Central Executive did not find acceptable other submissions which seemed to go too far in the direction of greater state intervention in the economic provinces where in one form or another the Co-operative movement is very active. Thus, the Central Executive cannot subscribe to the view that the state may need to exercise greater control over imported foodstuffs and assume wholesaling responsibilities for these. Nor could it share the view that imported meat and home-killed livestock may have to be considered in relation to state intervention. Similarly, the view that the importing of wheat, and flour-milling might become Government responsibilities was in conflict with the co-operative outlook. In the sphere of retail distribution, the Central Executive could not share the view that large firms like Great Universal Stores, Marks and Spencers, Woolworth's, etc. might have to be reconstructed on co-operative lines with the Co-operative movement having a say in their future operations.
>
> "Generally the submissions appeared to the Central Executive to be running counter to the true interests of the Co-operative movement, so that there was not found to be any reason why the considered statement on 'Co-operation and Socialism', submitted by the Central Executive and approved by Congress, should be changed."

In their statement on the nationalisation of coal distribution (1959) the Co-operative Union Executive stated:

> "The Co-operative movement at the present time can see no virtue in the monopoly of commodity distribution. The movement is always striving to show that co-operation is a *better* [own italics] *method of public ownership*, being more democratic than nationalisation."

This is a disastrous approach, even from a narrow trading point of view. The Co-operatives are fighting a life and death battle with big business, which at the moment they are not winning. By opposing state intervention where it is needed, and by calling for freedom for their worst enemies, they are making the fight for survival more difficult. By demanding the perpetuation of private profit-making enterprise, whether in the name of freedom of choice or any other, they are objectively assisting the opponents of a collective economy, whether it is labelled socialism or Co-operative Commonwealth, betraying the best, if muddled, ideals of the founders of their own movement.

The attempt to set up the co-operative as a form of public ownership *opposed* to nationalisation, is almost as great an error as Gaitskell's outright repudiation of it.

Once again, however, genuine Socialists should not react by under-estimating, or decrying, the very important element of democracy, and control both by consumer and worker, which the co-operative form of organisation potentially provides.

It is quite true that the machinery is not particularly designed to make easy the exercise of democratic rights; and also that it is now in the hands of a skilful, experienced, reactionary bureaucracy which does its utmost to thwart democracy. But the members do have their rights; it is possible for militants to gain elected positions. The more this happens and the more it is backed up by activity from the membership, the more real co-operative democracy becomes.

It may well be that when, in practice, we come up against the genuine difficulty of avoiding bureaucracy, and of stimulating workers' interest in large scale national concerns, co-operative experience may have something of value to contribute, in production as well as distribution, and co-operative may be preferable to centralised forms of organisation, even at the cost of some measure of efficiency.

Co-operative Activities Outside Distribution

This leads to another problem which is ripe for thorough consideration in Britain today. For historical reasons the Co-operative movement here has established fairly large interests in activities which are not ordinarily thought of as particularly appropriate to co-operation. We have already mentioned coal distribution, and insurance, where the movement has a foothold in high finance. There are also factories, especially in footwear, clothing, printing, soap etc. Some, owned by the Wholesale Societies, are operated much as ordinary capitalist factories; others, weak and few, but nevertheless existing, are organised on co-operative lines and looked after by the Co-operative Productive Federation.

Insurance illustrates the problem in its most acute form. There is wide agreement among Socialists that the public ownership of insurance is a necessary condition for further nationalisation of industry and for the planning and control of our economy, be-

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cause it is essential for the adequate control of investment and financial resources. Now insurance cannot be regarded as one of the classic fields for co-operation. Should the Co-operative Insurance Society be nationalised? Or should it be left a co-operative sector, alongside the main nationalised one?

The movement lacks an authoritative answer to these questions and badly needs one. On grounds of economy of administration and of potential efficiency, it is not easy to make out a case for the retention of the co-operative organisation. But the great majority of co-operators—and by these are not meant the right-wing leaders, who have declared against nationalisation, but the vast army of rank and file who still believe, if only vaguely, in the Co-operative Commonwealth—would strongly oppose such a move. Sentiment plays some part in this resistance, but they can also point to the democratic possibilities of the movement, which are there to be used and improved if the rank and file make a really determined effort to do so. It is quite possible for democratic pressure to reach to places even as remote as the Boardroom of the Co-operative Insurance Society.

All things considered, and in view of the experiences of the Soviet Union, it would probably be best to take this feeling into account, not only for the sake of making it easier to hold the support of co-operators, but also so that the truth in these claims can be tested in practice. *Labour should act on the principle of leaving in co-operative hands existing co-operative enterprises, of all kinds, unless and until it becomes clear that their working with, and integration into, the nationalised system can only be obtained satisfactorily by complete nationalisation.* And it may be found that co-operation could with benefit be introduced into sectors where it does not now operate; or existing co-operative activities be deliberately expanded.

It would be much easier to correct mistakes resulting from over-caution than to reverse a wholesale taking-over of co-operative enterprises in the first stage of nationalisation, and it would make possible the enthusiastic support of thousands of co-operators and their organisations, which might otherwise be lost.

An examination of Gaitskell's tricky approach to public ownership and nationalisation has led us deep into some profound theoretical problems, of special urgency and importance in Britain. If we are not crystal clear on what social ownership is, and how it relates to the building of socialism in our country, we have little chance of defending it from the attacks which anti-Socialists are launching on it from positions of advantage inside the leadership of the Labour movement.

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The Rediscovery of Chartism

A. L. Morton

THE total suppression of Chartism in English historical writing lasted for well over fifty years, and its rediscovery is still far from complete. A movement that had dominated the political field for a whole decade was so forgotten that Theodore Rothstein could say that in 1905, when he came to study the subject:

> "Even English political and historical literature had, with the exception of Gammage's well known volume, not a single book or even pamphlet on the Chartist Movement."

It is easy to understand why the English ruling class should wish to bury Chartism, that reminder of the falsity of their myth of the absence of class struggle in Britain. It seems more strange to us how little the Socialists of the 1880's drew upon the Chartist experience—at that time no more distant from them than the General Strike is from us.

Rothstein's pioneer work, the first of its kind, was important in a sense, but, extraordinary as it must now seem, it remained in Russian or German, unavailable for English readers, till 1929. This meant that the first detailed study of Chartism to appear in England was Mark Hovell's *The Chartist Movement,* published in 1918 after his death in the First World War, which had prevented him from completing it. This book has obvious shortcomings, in particular that its standpoint is avowedly that of Lovett and the Chartist right wing, but it is still the first attempt at a serious historical narrative and estimate, and, it must be said, until recently the study of Chartism has advanced very little beyond the point at which Hovell left it. A number of other general studies have appeared, but all using pretty much the same material. And even such Marxist books as *When England Arose* by Salme A. Dutt and *The Fight for the Charter* by Neil Stewart, while important for their new analysis and as a much needed corrective to the reformist outlook of bourgeois work, did not really add any new *facts* to the generally recognised picture.

Recently, however, several new books have appeared, which, thought not written from a standpoint in any way Marxist, do still give important new knowledge and make contributions in fields which have so far been especially neglected.

A Study of Harney

The first of these is *The Chartist Challenge. A Portrait of George Julian Harney,* written by an American scholar, A. R. Schoyen and published by Heinemann (25s.). This is particularly welcome because of the lack of adequate Chartist biographies, a lack only partly compensated for by G. D. H. Cole's *Chartist Portraits.* This is, in fact, the first full-scale, modern biography of any Chartist leader with the exception of David Williams' *John Frost.* Like many American scholars today, Schoyen feels it necessary to make certain genuflections in the direction of anti-Communism, but, apart from the pages dealing with Harney's break with Marx, these do not seriously affect the value of his work. And it must be said that in general its value is considerable. He has obviously taken immense trouble to master the very scattered sources, and his book contains new and illuminating material both on Harney himself and the Chartist movement as a whole. More important, in contrast with most bourgeois work on the subject, which has been written at best from the standpoint of Lovett and his associates, Schoyen has approached the Chartist left with a sympathy and respect that puts many episodes into a new perspective.

From this point of view the choice of Harney as subject was an excellent one. Harney was for a long time the most effective spokesman of the section which advocated arming and the necessity of armed insurrection. A discussion of his views and career therefore necessitates a consideration of some of the most fundamental questions of Chartist tactics and strategy. Such discussions have in the past often been bedevilled by the false antithesis between moral and physical force Chartism. No doubt there were moral force Chartists, no doubt there were Chartists who thought it was possible to confine their agitation to peaceful and legal methods. Yet very few, I think, did not regard armed insurrection as morally justifiable. (They all greeted the revolution of 1848 in Germany and Paris with enthusiasm. And many even of the bourgeoisie still looked back with pride to "their" revolution of 1688.) The questions on which they differed were, rather, whether in the existing circumstances, armed insurrection was necessary or possible. And those who believed it

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either unnecessary or impossible or both, were still faced with the problem of what methods, short of insurrection, could be adopted.

Harney, at least in his earlier years, had no doubts about the matter. In a speech at Norwich in November 1838, he declared:

> "They had petitioned too long, they had prayed too long, they now demanded. They would have the Charter or die in the attempt to obtain it. . . . Petitioning had always failed unless the people backed their petitions by *arguments* not to be misunderstood." (Schoyen, p. 38)

A little later at Derby he made it clear what arguments he had in mind:

> "Believe me, there is no argument like the sword—and the musket is unanswerable." (p. 49)

Always looking to the French Revolution for analogies, he saw the London Democratic Association which he founded as destined to repeat the role of the Jacobins—ousting the Girondists of the Working Men's Association and increasingly dominating the vast Marsh of the confused and politically undetermined centre.

Yet in considering Harney's career there is always a doubt, which this biography by no means removes, as to how far his advocacy of insurrection was serious, was more than a flourish of rhetoric. No doubt he was entirely sincere in his belief in the necessity for arming, yet it was one thing to advise the people to arm, and to encourage them to believe that these arms must be used, but quite another to undertake the serious organisation and detailed preparations without which insurrection could scarcely begin, let alone succeed. I can find little to show that Harney ever passed from the first to the second of these stages—which is no doubt also true of other leaders of the Chartist left. He seems to have taken little or no part in the, admittedly amateur and inadequate, plans for a rising in the winter of 1839-40. Schoyen seems to think that at the time of his arrest in July 1839 an outbreak in the north was only averted by Harney's own actions, though it may fairly be argued that he wished to avoid a premature conflict. And finally, he cannot be acquitted of a large share in the responsibility for the breakdown of Chartist leadership during the great strike of 1842. After this time he apparently ceased to believe in the possibility of successful insurrection in Britain, and his writings and speeches show a marked change in character.

The Conditions for Insurrection

All this, of course, leads to the larger question of whether the objective conditions for such a successful insurrection were present in Britain in the period of Chartism. To what extent were the people armed? To what extent were they prepared for revolution? The evidence has always been fragmentary and often conflicting; much more needs to be done on this question, but Schoyen gives some interesting new data. On the one hand we have the situation in and around Newcastle, where, he says:

> "In the small villages lying out from Newcastle the exhortations to arm were being taken literally. At Winlaton, where the great Crowley works had made a community of iron-workers, a strong tradition of owner-paternalism had been replaced by an extremely class conscious Chartism, and fowling pieces, small cannon, stoneware hand-grenades, pikes, and 'craa's feet' or caltrops . . . were being turned out in quantities. It was localities like this which, on hearing rumours that troops would be present at the great meeting at Newcastle on Christmas Day, sent couriers to find out if they were to bring their arms with them." (p. 42)

He refers also to an outbreak on July 30th, 1839, in the same area, which developed into a hard-fought struggle—later called the

> "'Battle of the Forth'—involving some 6,000 Chartists, half of whom were armed, and a force of two companies of infantry, a troop of dragoons and 500 special constables. This was almost on the scale of regular warfare." (p. 80)

At the other end of the scale there were large areas where the influence of Chartism was slight, and there was London, where a meeting at Islington Green,

> "was told by Harney that they should all arm—'they would shortly be called upon to act'. Cheers greeted this pronouncement, but Harney's request that those who were armed should hold up their hands was responded to by fewer than a score of his listeners, and a further request that those who were determined to acquire arms should give a similar indication was answered, as the police observer present reported, 'by a few hands rather timidly raised'." (p. 66)

Both the Tyneside and London were areas with which Harney was intimately acquainted, and one may imagine that his volatile and impressionable temperament responded sensitively to such negative and positive stimuli. Between such extremes, as the very varied reports both of police agents and Chartist "missionaries" attest, lay every degree of preparedness and unpreparedness for action.

This extremely uneven development was reflected in the Chartist leadership, and it is clear that an important element in the objective situation was the mood and character of the leadership as well as of the rank and file. We can never know how the masses might have responded to a bold and united lead because the heterogeneous

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nature of the movement made it impossible for that lead ever to be given. While a few leaders thought, like Harney, that armed insurrection was, or at least might be, necessary, and others, especially those of the Working Men's Associations, were convinced that peaceful agitation was the only possible line, many more, and possibly also the majority of the rank and file, based their strategy on a complete mis-estimation of the class forces. They so far overrated their own strength, and under-rated that of the ruling class, as to imagine that the mere threat of revolution would be enough to ensure a speedy victory. Harney, while freer than most from such illusions, was undoubtedly voicing the feelings of vast numbers of Chartists when he declared on New Year's Day, 1839:

> "Three months will bring about the changes we seek; and 1839 shall be as memorable in the annals of England as 1793 is in the annals of France." (p. 48)

When the threat of revolution had proved ineffective many of the leaders of Chartism had no further resources to fall back upon, and the wide diffusion of such illusory hopes was perhaps one of the reasons for the final disintegration of Chartism when repeated failures had shown their falsity.

This failure of judgment may be personified in the towering figure of O'Connor, who seems to embody so much both of the grandeur and weaknesses of the movement. Both his strength and weakness stand revealed by his declaration at a Birmingham Conference in December, 1842:

> "I don't lead; I am driven by the people. The people gave the lead to the agitation and we followed."

It was his closeness to the people, his responsiveness to their moods and desires, which gave him his commanding position in the movement and his unrivalled ability as an agitator. It was his lack of a political philosophy, his inability to follow a constant course or to see beyond the immediate requirements of the day-to-day struggle, that made his leadership in the long run so disastrous. Of course it would be a mistake to attribute too much to his qualities as an individual; rather it is as a typical figure, the embodiment of so many of the characteristics of the movement as a whole, that he was important. Perhaps he was the *kind* of leader who was inevitable, given the immaturity of the class at this time; and a study of his role and career would go a long way towards helping us to understand why the National Charter Association never passed beyond the more elementary stages of organisation as a workers' party. The absence of any full-length biography of O'Connor is one of the most extraordinary and regrettable gaps still to be filled in the historiography of the British working class movement.[1]

Local Studies of the Chartist Movement

If Schoyen's book throws light on one aspect of the conflicts and contradictions within Chartism, *Chartist Studies*, edited by Professor Asa Briggs and published by Macmillan (42s.), is no less revealing in another way. Most previous English works on Chartism have been attempts, from one aspect or another, to give a general picture of it as a national movement. There has been, alongside the poverty in biographies already mentioned, a great lack of more specialised work, regional histories or attempts to deal with particular aspects or episodes. Professor Briggs' volume is almost the first serious attempt to meet this deficiency, and as such is of the greatest importance both for what it itself achieves and as an indication of the kind of work that needs to be done before a new full-scale synthesis can be profitably attempted.

A large part of it is devoted to a series of essays on Chartism in a number of towns and regions—Manchester, Leeds, Leicester, Suffolk, Somerset and Wiltshire, Wales and Scotland. These are of the utmost importance because the rapid but uneven growth of the working class in this age is reflected in the very great differences which the forms of the movement took locally. Thus, for example, there were already areas where factory production predominated, others where domestic or workshop industry, though in decline, still held its own. In London and many of the older towns the skilled artisans were still the leading force, though often existing alongside a large and extremely depressed mass of unskilled or semi-skilled workers—the silk weavers and dock-side workers of London are a good example. The mining areas had a strongly marked character of their own, and on the top of all this there was the great gap between the industrial and agricultural areas, though British agriculture had long been capitalist and nothing existed that can be compared with the peasant movements found in many parts of Europe. Hugh Fearn's chapter on Suffolk in this book shows that Chartism was not so lacking in appeal to the agricultural workers as has often been thought, provided that some leadership was given from the industrial towns.

Chartism found support in all these areas, and its varying regional forms reflect not geographical differences but differences in class structure. In

[1] Joy MacAsgill's chapter *The Chartist Land Plan* in *Chartist Studies* has some useful points about O'Connor's political outlook.

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this age of uneven development and difficult communications—the main railway lines were only being constructed during the Chartist decade—such local differences of class structure were naturally of a deep and lasting nature. Obviously much more remains to be done before we have anything like a complete regional picture of the complexities of Chartism, yet the places selected here are sufficiently well chosen to provide a fair sample of the main trends, and their value should stimulate other work along similar lines. As Professor Briggs writes in his introductory Chapter:

> "These studies give some idea both of the diversity of the pattern and the factors making for continued unity. Each study is complete in itself, and although the authors reveal certain differences of approach, the differences are never greater than those which existed in the local chronicles of Chartism itself." (p. 28)

Perhaps the best of these chapters are those contributed by J. F. C. Harrison on Leeds and Leicester.

The State in Action

F. C. Mather, who also contributes a chapter to *Chartist Studies,* has recently published a book *Public Order in the Age of the Chartists* (Manchester University Press, 32s. 6d.). This, while perhaps no less important than the others mentioned, is of a very different character. They deal with the subject more or less from the point of view of Labour history, but in any class struggle there are two sides, and Mather writes quite undisguisedly from the side of the ruling class. Thus, referring to the actions of the police against a Chartist meeting at Bishop Bonner's Fields in June 1848, he comments:

> "Individual constables, exasperated by months of emergencies and alarms, may, on this occasion, have allowed their anger to outrun their discretion, but the behaviour of the Metropolitan Police Force towards disorderly crowds was usually both good-humoured and restrained." (p. 101).

Those of us who remember the methods of the police against unemployed or anti-Fascist demonstrations in the 1920's and 1930's, and the official apologies for those actions, may be forgiven a certain scepticism.

Mather even defends on principle the employment of provocateurs:

> "The spies of the Chartist movement were active, therefore, in encouraging disorder, but they were not on the whole the prime movers; and from this it follows that, in the absence of modern methods of detecting crime and conspiracy, the employment of such agents was justified." (p. 215)

And he is openly contemptuous of those Radicals who tried to use Parliament in defence of civil liberties. Writing of a motion by Fielden to demand an enquiry into the use of Factory Inspectors as political spies (which he admits as a fact) his comment is:

> "Fielden's motion was defeated by 113 votes to 11, but not before a good deal of extravagant language had been voiced." (p. 187)

Such bias is too transparent to be seriously misleading, and this book does provide a mass of new and important material about the state machinery, its use against the people and the steps taken to strengthen it during the Chartist period. It first describes the traditional structure—magistrates, local police forces, the army, together with the special powers of repression developed during emergencies — special constables, yeomanry, Chelsea Pensioners and so forth. Mather gives a full account of the extent to which all these were employed, as well as of their weaknesses, and then discusses the new, stream-lined police force which was being created just at this time. It was in fact very largely as a counter to Chartism that the organs of the state were being reorganised. As he says:

> "It is now clear, however, that the Rural Police Act of 1839 was precipitated by the Chartist disturbances of that year and, in particular, by the desire to relieve the military of a pressure which was in the highest degree inconvenient and injurious." (p. 128)

The establishment of the "new" police was indeed only one of many aspects of a decisive strengthening of the state. Mather mentions others. Troops were concentrated in barracks to prevent contact with the workers, and this was the more possible because the railway system now enabled reinforcements to move quickly from place to place: the first considerable use of such rail transport was during the great strike of 1842. Again, the Post Office had its political aspect: local Postmasters were required to provide "an account of all the remarkable occurrences within their district" (p. 195). Finally, a new secrecy was given to the practice of opening letters in the post—a practice widely used against Chartist leaders. Before 1844 warrants for the opening of letters were entered in a "Private and Secret Entry Book", which could still be scrutinised by a Parliamentary committee on demand. In June 1844, however, a scandal was created by interference with Mazzini's mail, and from that time no more such entries were made, thus removing all possibility of a check on the practice.

All this, and much more, may be found in *Public Order in the Age of the Chartists,* and

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perhaps the value of Mather's book lies precisely in the unselfconscious frankness with which he records what he regards as the necessary and proper improvements in the machinery of Government.

The People's Charter

What emerges from all these books, I think, is the great sharpening of class forces and attitudes which marked the age of Chartism, and, so far as the workers were concerned, the part played by Chartism in imposing a new class unity upon still existing sectional differences. Obviously the immediate interests of factory workers, hand-loom weavers and skilled craftsmen could be quite different and even conflicting. So we find a national Chartist agitation emerging from a number of local and sectional agitations—against the Poor Law of 1834, for the Ten-Hour Day, for Factory Acts, for an unstamped press, against various forms of local monopoly, privilege and corruption. In addition to all these there had long existed among the skilled artisans a more sophisticated element which was deeply concerned with the question of Parliamentary reform and even with foreign politics. It was among them, and in areas where they were strong, that Chartism *originated,* though these areas were never the real Chartist strongholds and the leadership of the movement passed from them at an early stage. Engels's observation that Birmingham was a Radical rather than a Chartist town would have been just as true of London and a number of other places.

Yet having originated in these artisan circles the Charter became the rallying point of the whole class, sweeping into a united movement all these diverse sections and agitations. As Professor Briggs says:

> "The People's Charter was the work of Lovett, but when its virtues began to be extolled on the platform at mass meetings or at torchlight gatherings on the northern moors it was being used in a very different kind of way from what the L.W.M.A. had first intended. All the social grievances of a discontented Britain were poured into the political vessel. Along with Douglas's petition it became, in Carlyle's phrase, 'the cry of pent-up millions suffering under a diseased condition of society'. Its basic strength lay in its power to unify discontented people in all parts of the country." (p. 25)

It did this because it struck a clear class note, because it said in effect, "Your sufferings, which are intolerable, are due to the fact that the state (the 'power over the laws' in O'Brien's phrase) is in the hands of your class enemies. Things can never go well in England till you have united as a class and taken this power into your own hands." It was this simple yet profound idea which gripped a whole class and moved it into action—something quite new in the history of the world. It is this complex of diversity and unity that makes Chartism so hard to grasp in detail, which sets the historian so many problems, which presents such a surface picture of futile squabbles and hopeless contradictions. It is the magnificent simplicity of this basic Chartist idea which makes the squabbles and contradictions so unimportant when we see what a turning point in world history Chartism represents.

Patronage and the Arts

Ray Watkinson

PATRONAGE AND THE ARTS is the title under which the Bow Group recently issued a report written, or rather compiled, by Richard Carless and Patricia Brewster on the basis of papers written by ten other members of this "progressive" Tory organisation. It is extremely difficult to draw together the work of many hands and give it unity, and perhaps Conservatives, however progressive, are not the most skilled in such arts. At all events, the marks of the many hands of very uneven ability remain.

The skill of the contributors as writers may be criticised, the depth of their thought doubted; but we must accept the document in good faith as the expression of real concern over the state of the arts in Britain now. While there is some complacency about the inner condition and achievement of particular arts, there is a general conviction that the arts are precious and that we as a nation can and should do much more than we do now to preserve and promote them. Many of the ideas expressed will be found very liberal—dangerously so no doubt by hide-bound Conservatives—and there is general acceptance of the inevitability of state support, encouragement and subsidy for the arts: but some of the deeper implications of this acceptance are blinked, while the real nature and importance of the arts is taken at a rather superficial level.

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"Patronage"

The title of the document prepares one for this. It suggests the terms of reference within which the authors have worked on the problem in a phrase which reveals their limited view of its extent. "Patronage" is, or should be, a highly suspect term to any Socialist, even—or especially —with the qualifying prefix of "working class". As long as we view the crises, problems, hopes and prospects of the arts in terms of patronage we shall never see them clearly or be bold enough to deal with them; we shall only swing between illusions and despair. The crises of the arts are aspects of the crisis of capitalist society, which is not less real for its long continuance.

The conception of patronage as the necessary condition of the arts implies that they are exotics, inessential to our life, however pleasant or useful as weapons of lifemanship. Nobody speaks of patronage of the steel industry or of deep-sea fishing or nuclear research, whatever crisis they might have reached and however imperative the need for capital funds to develop them. The implication of the term patronage is that the concern of the public at large, or man the social and political animal, is oblique and charitable; it implies an unequal, lop-sided relation; an air of favour and condescension toward a range of human activities in which a small proportion of people may indulge with pleasure, but which are by no means essential to the serious business of life. This standpoint, of course, is by no means confined to Conservatives; nor are the authors of this pamphlet altogether happy about the nature of patronage, even while they accept it as a fundamental necessity. At all events they feel bound to quote Dr. Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield, "Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?" Looking back to the state of the arts in the nineteen-thirties, the quotation is more apt than the Bow Group would be likely to realise.

The Prestige Idea

If the practice and use and enjoyment of the arts were in a healthy state, and their real place in life understood, we should use the term "patronage" only in a restricted and well-defined context; we should not see patronage (as here conceived) as the proper and inevitable condition for the existence of the arts. Above all, we should not see the chief value of the arts as conferring prestige and status either on the individual or the community large or small, though they may well do this. To see the arts as agencies of pleasure and enjoyment, sensuous, social and intellectual, may not be to give them their full scope; but it is very much nearer the reality than the conception that sees them in terms of the gold-plated Cadillac. The prestige conception of art is a class conception; one which will certainly continue as long as there are classes to breed it, but one which will die with them.

Not only does this expression of the relation of the arts to the rest of life imply a narrow and naive idea of their nature and of that relation; it implies above all an unhistorical view. The vast majority of works of art (certainly those which have tangible form) which come down to us from the past are now valuable articles of commerce whose principal use is indeed the conferring of status: but they were neither conceived simply in this way nor in some ideal state of artistic freedom. Most had very real and well-understood social uses (including that of marking status) and it is only with the passage of time that they have been liberated from their use-relation to the community and achieved the semi-mystical state of the "work of art". Just as the serf was freed from the land to become a wage slave, so the ritual mask, the altarpiece, the tapestry, have been freed from their first functions to become at once works of art and articles of commerce.

It might have helped the Bow Group to have read William Morris on the nature of art. They may be excused for not having done so, particularly if they accept the Baldwinian view of him as a comic medievalist, but it is significant of the limitations of their view that they are hardly more aware of the Council of Industrial Design or the Design Centre, whose work is directed very pointedly to the essential problem under discussion, but which are merely mentioned in passing in one paragraph. Industrial design, evidently, is not an art. Industry in the Tory view, has no more profound part to play than that of a giver of alms; to be, in the exact sense of Dr. Johnson's sharp phrases, a patron.

Jargon

All of us use jargon; the more specialised our association with others in work, play, politics, the more easily we fall into the use of shorthand and private languages. All professions, all trades, all religions, all political persuasions have patterns of language and thought by which, under all disguises, we may suspect them for what they are. We are, of course, no exception; nor are the members of the Bow Group. In this document the jargon ranges from the language of the researcher's report to crude and inexact business English; it needed no reference to the notes on its

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authorship to know that at least one hand was that of an advertising man.

Such empty terms as "global figure" in reference to a particular and not very large expenditure; as *"contemporary* shopping precinct", betray the loose, self-persuaded attitudes of the copy-writer and market-researcher, and such garbled sentences as this— "The second main requirement is for the clarification of the tax position of business and the arts"—suggest that writing is one art to which some of the contributors might have given more practical attention than "patronage". Literal inaccuracies in names, certainly not to be laid at the door of the very respectable printer, suggest a superficial reading of other people's reports rather than first-hand knowledge: "Holbourne and Menstrie" appears for Holburne of Menstrie; "Gerald Holton" for Gerald Holtham; "Stratford Manchester," for Stretford, Lancashire; "Ivor Hitchens", for Ivon Hitchens; "Hatherly", for Heatherley, all leap to the eye. Even worse is this sort of baffling inaccuracy, from the section on architecture: "It is hoped that from it will emerge some more exemplary work akin to that in the pattern books of the eighteenth century *which did so much to influence the Renaissance."* This bespeaks a very odd acquaintance with history.

Goodwill not Enough

These are technical criticisms; but they have an obvious bearing on our judgment of the document, and leave us thinking that good will towards the arts and anxiety as to the temporary state of all or any are by no means enough to evolve a serious policy. Command of fact, capacity for analysis, imaginative grasp of new possibilities, are at least as necessary.

I have already said that the contributors of the original papers are of very unequal weight. The sections on music, opera, ballet and theatre are the best composed, the best documented, the most fully based on fact and figure. Those on sculpture and painting are vague, superficial and amateurish; that on film almost non-existent. In a page and a half it burkes every issue and idea to end with this superbly fatuous conclusion:

> "The film, if it is to be developed as the art it is, requires more money in the shape of increased grants through existing channels of subsidy. *Above all, it requires a lead from those within the industry, and this is likely to depend on the emergence of one or two individuals to blaze a new trail."*

I doubt whether the most conservative of workers in the film world, at any level, will derive much hope from that. Perhaps it is an unacknowledged quotation from one of Rank's Sunday School addresses. Certainly, while we wait for this saviour from on high, our dwindled film industry can rot, studios close down, actors, cameramen, directors and scriptwriters go whistle, and the Americans monopolise the last fragments of a market (and an art-form) which in the last ten years has been battered into a new shape by the growth of television.

Let me reach down for a last draught from this well of English undefiled. "The range of documentary matter has spilled well out of the range of the definition, and creative film makers have developed out of this field to introduce some of the vitality into commercial films which the industry lacks." This would hardly gain the writer a pass in G.C.E. (O) English, and if the thought and texture of the whole document were down at this level there would be no point in wasting words on it.

There is, however, a good deal which is worth discussion. Essentially the policy toward which these earnest progressive Tories are groping is one which only socialism could realise. They are uneasily aware of this as the distressing conclusion of all their serious argument, and they have done all they could to avoid it. One fact which emerges very clearly is that the real support for the arts is coming more and more from government and local authority agencies; big business, which they would love to present as the vital "patron" of modern times, makes a very poor second. Competitions, prizes, charitable gifts (the highest cited is one of £5,000 a year for seven years from A.B.C. Television to Sadler's Wells; no heavier burden to A.B.C. than a grasshopper!) —these are insignificant both in amount and kind: acts of charity and encouragement, however welcome to the immediate beneficiaries, have no fundamental bearing on the central problem of the viability of the arts in a highly developed capitalist community. Nor, to be fair, does the author of the section on business patronage have any illusion as to the basis of the support which business gives to the arts:

> "The ruling motive for business patronage is prestige. The expenditure is regarded as a public relations activity and is designed to impress those whose opinions are important. Leading British companies, like their American counterparts, are becoming increasingly concerned that their public image should be a good one, and they *are quite prepared to spend money on any activity which is likely to win favourable comment in the local or national press."*

This frank statement concludes with an equally frank notice to those who may gain from business munificence. "If they are to take full advantage of recent trends in business generosity they will

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do well to respect the motive of their patrons and therefore not be shy of acknowledging their benefactions in public." It is quite clear that a corollary of this is that the man who pays the piper will sooner or later want to call the tune. This thought probably only distresses the Bow Group when it emerges in relation to the state or local government as patron.

"A Philosophy of Patronage"

The conclusions of the report are all drawn together in the last four pages: one is devoted to "A philosophy of patronage". Here in eleven single-sentence paragraphs, rather repetitiously, is set out the thesis that the arts are nationally important, that the support of the state is essential both to preservation of past and the promotion of living art, that central control must be avoided—though at the same time (and in the sphere of living arts at that!) "the state must be prepared to support an essential minimum of what is best in the arts, to consolidate successful artistic ventures, and *to facilitate long-term planning*".

What is *best* in the arts, what constitutes a *successful* artistic venture, is hard to determine; nor would it be either fair or much to the point to pursue these conceptions. What provokes more curiosity in my mind is the conception of long-term planning of the arts, which comes oddly from Conservative thinkers. I wish they had had more to say about this.

But perhaps they mean no more than is implied in the remaining three pages of conclusions, headed, "A plan for patronage". In essence this rests on a much expanded national expenditure on the arts, principally through the Arts Council. It is probably more a fear of centralisation than a desire to promote the arts at all levels that prompts the attention given, in the body of the report, to the work of local authorities as "patrons": but it is apparent that such authorities as the L.C.C., Coventry and Nottingham have set the pace in this field—not under Conservative leadership; and the Tory policy of the block grant to local authorities will very considerably reduce their effectiveness in promoting the arts and so balancing that danger of over-centralisation which the authors so fear. Nor is it to be forgotten that ultimately it is the Treasury which appoints the Arts Council. This is inevitable, whatever form the agency may take; if public money is to be spent on the arts, final control will always rest with the Treasury; and the man who pays the piper will undoubtedly call the tune. This hard fact makes it the more vital to rid ourselves of the conception of patronage, to shake off such erroneous ideas as those with which this report opens its discussion (p. 12—"Subsidy without strings"):

> *"Patronage of the arts is necessary because they have never been and never will be self-supporting.* Therefore if the improved educational opportunities which are now available to all are to lead to correspondingly greater cultural opportunities in the beneficial use of leisure, the arts must continue to receive support, support which will have to increase as cultural provision develops and as costs continue to rise. . . . The state must then step in to prevent a deterioration in the financial predicament of the arts."

Art and Life

Severely as one may criticise much of the work of the Arts Council, its value in certain directions is undeniable: unwilling as most local authorities have proved in making use of their powers to use the product of the sixpenny rate authorised by Section 132 of the Local Government Act of 1948, this is a valuable provision, and where, even fractionally, it has been put into effect, much live activity has flowed from it. The report is critical of the local authorities, as we are, for their general unwillingness to use this provision: it is hardly critical at all of the Arts Council, though the figures given show that its funds are disposed in a very unbalanced way, and that the practice of the arts in the widest possible way is far outside its views; but in essence it is to the Arts Council and the local authorities that the authors turn for the basic pattern of development. The provisions under which both operate were, of course, the creation of the Labour Government between 1945 and 1950; and on the whole it has been those authorities controlled by Left Labour which have been most active in availing themselves of both sorts of provision.

But behind all this, good and bad, Conservative or Labour, is the conception that art is a leisure activity, a luxury, inessential. Our Victorian great-grandfathers were wiser in their generation—some of them at least. They knew that the Crystal Palace and the Great Eastern, the new railway stations and steamships, gave something to art as well as to industry. Capitalism has driven a wedge between art and life; but that is no reason why we should forget that one of our objectives as Socialists is the restoration of the unity of life. On the way there, it will not help to lose sight of Morris's view that art is the expression of man's joy in his labour. But, of course, we shall need more than an Arts Council to achieve that as a reality.

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Discussion contributions:

On Technological Progress and Price Movements

Maurice Dobb

R. BELLAMY, in his most interesting and informative article in *Marxism Today* for January criticises my suggestion that the nature of technical change must be included as part of the explanation of the special course taken by the economic cycle since the war. I am not quite sure whether the difference between us is merely one of emphasis or a more substantial one, since I am not altogether clear after reading him whether he means to deny that technical change has played *any* significant role, or merely to deny that it is of *major* importance. (In one place he speaks of putting this factor in its "proper, i.e. subordinate, place".)

In the way he develops the argument he seems to forget that I was speaking of technical change as only one of two factors, the other being state expenditure "largely but not exclusively for military purposes (and hence to this extent associated with 'militarisation of the economy')" (*Marxism Today,* October 1959, p. 294). Thus I would fully agree with him that, as regards U.S.A. capitalism, "the arms drive played the key role" (*Marxism Today,* January 1960, p. 18), so long as by key role he means the *major,* and not the exclusive, role. The part that this technical factor plays, in my opinion (and the reason for my original emphasis on it in the 1957 article that he mentions), is as explaining the buoyancy of *private* investment, even at times when state expenditures were "levelling off" or actually declining somewhat, as in the middle fifties (a fact which stood in conflict with the exclusive emphasis on the arms drive that some Marxist writers had adopted). This is not to claim that it is capable of bearing the whole weight of explaining why 1929 was not repeated in the fifties. Yet in the way he argues for playing it down as an influence, this is what he seems to imply that I was claiming for it.

Bellamy is quite right, of course, in saying that, if this factor is at all important, its influence is likely to be more than temporary and may last, e.g., throughout the coming decade of the sixties. But since it is not the only influence in the picture, this does not necessarily mean that the buoyancy of investment which characterised most of the fifties will continue in the sixties. This depends on what happens to the rest of the picture, which may well change in important respects (as we strongly hope it will with respect to the arms drive). The most I would claim is that it provides one reason for not expecting the crises of the 1960's to be simply patterned on 1930. Crises there will surely be; and the doubts that are beginning already to be expressed across the Atlantic whether the present American boom will outlast this year seem to give some justification for the remark in my article that " the resumption of the American investment boom . . . cannot last very long—it may even be shorter than that of 1954-7" (*Marxism Today,* October 1959, p. 293).

This brings me to what might seem to be the most effective shot in Bellamy's locker: namely, the figures he cites of the average annual increase in productivity in the fifties, which show this to have been no greater (except between 1954 and 1956) than the average increase for the period 1907-39. But since it was never my intention to present technical change as more than a contributory influence, I am not unduly impressed by this result. The years in the middle-fifties, when this productivity-increase *was* substantially higher, in U.S.A. at any rate, are those to which my explanation was particularly applied (American armament expenditures having reached a plateau at this period); and the earlier period, taken as a basis of comparison (i.e. before the war), was itself an exceptional period as regards rising labour productivity, including as it did the period of the First World War and the twenties, which in U.S.A. was something of a climacteric as regards technical change, with its "mass production", the widespread American talk in the twenties about "technological unemployment", and the rise of new industries like motors and aircraft, artificial fibres and plastics. Indeed, in my 1957 article in *Marxism Today* I referred to this earlier period as a "threshold stage" to automation.

The *difference* then was, of course, that in the

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inter-war period the *other* factors in the situation worked to inhibit, not to assist, the process of capital accumulation. Until the late thirties there was no large armaments drive, and over most of the period state expenditures were shrinking, not expanding; while the degree of influence of state capitalism over the economy was altogether on a smaller scale. The result was that while American capitalism enjoyed an exceptional boom throughout most of the twenties (suffering relatively little from the crisis of the early twenties which hit Britain so hard), the crisis of overcapacity when it came was all the more devastating (aggravated as this was by the agrarian crisis, afflicting colonial and semi-colonial countries with special severity). Like Bellamy, I am far from wishing "to adopt a single cause explanation". The important thing is to see factors in their interaction.

Automation

One more thing I should like to explain on this matter of technical change. I was careful to speak of "revolutionary technological change *associated with* automation". I had no intention of confining my reference to what can be called "automation" in the strict sense. Bellamy may well be right in saying that there has been relatively little of this—although Dr. Lilley three years ago, in his *Automation and Social Progress*, seemed to imply that it had became a significant factor since the Second World War (e.g. page 25). Where exactly the line is to be drawn, if one is using the term strictly, I do not pretend to know. One can only agree with Bellamy that it would be highly useful to have more detailed information on what changes there have been from workers and technicians in the industries themselves. However, one would have guessed that during the past decade there had been extensive re-equipment and modernisation of industry *in the direction* of automation, sufficient at least to give that supplementary lift to capital investment which is all I am claiming for it.

I would also like to add that I cannot see any justification for the charge (true, it is stated as no more than an "impression") of "treating the productive forces as if they were an independent, or at least always the initiating, force". The precise effect that changes in the productive forces will have, as well as the nature and degree of such change, is, of course, always conditioned by the social relations of the given period; and I was under the impression that, in writing in the past about capitalism and its development, I had always stressed this to an unusual extent. The most that could be said, I think, is that I also had in mind a statement of Stalin (which, incidentally, was the occasion of some controversy in Volume 5, No. 1, of the old *Modern Quarterly*), to the effect that "the productive forces are not only the most mobile and revolutionary element in production but are also the determining element in the development of production". I notice that even Bellamy himself is not adverse to treating population-increase as a factor that can boost investment (although he properly qualifies this by saying "under given conditions of class struggle").

To my mind the most interesting part of Bellamy's contribution is his suggestion that in our own case (and also other countries of Western Europe, by contrast with America) the major factor has been the changed relationship with colonial countries, leading to a rise in exports and to import-substitution at home. This evidently deserves serious attention and further study. There can be no doubt, I think, that this was a major factor in the immediate post-war years. What inclines me to doubt, however, whether it can be given anything approaching pride of place in the post-war period as a whole is that the movement of the so-called "terms of trade", through which this changed relationship with agrarian colonial and semi-colonial areas mainly showed itself, have not moved consistently against British capitalism over the period. After a pronounced adverse movement between pre-war and the post-war years, they even swung back a little over part of the fifties. To give a sustained boost to capitalism and its accumulation process, a once-for-all change is not enough; a *continuing* change is needed.

Moreover, has not one to bear in mind that there is a reverse side of the picture: namely, that the changed relationship of which Bellamy is speaking represents a diminishing possibility for British capital of drawing super-profit from its economic relations with other countries, and that it must be associated accordingly with *adverse* effects upon the rate of profit at home? If this be the case, it cannot be treated as having an exclusively favourable influence on the capitalist investment process (depending as this does on expectations of profit). At best it can only have been a mixed blessing for British capitalism.

Price Movements and Monopoly

A word in conclusion about the remarks on price-movements in the second half of Bellamy's article. I could not claim to speak for Emile Burns (whose name is bracketed with mine in this connection); but speaking for myself, I should not think of suggesting that monopoly capitalists, either as individual firms or in the aggregate, can raise prices at will. Here there is no disagree-

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ment at all between us. What monopolists can do with prices is, of course, limited by the condition of the market, that is by demand. If the contrary idea is current (as he says it is), his underlining of this point is well-justified. I agree with him in principle that to say that monopoly-price is above value is not to say that monopoly necessarily and always *raises* prices; just as I agree with him that any downward pressure of demand in 1957-8 was negligible compared with the collapse of 1929-30.

In a Crisis

But when he questions my suggestion (it was no more) that nowadays in a crisis monopolists may maintain or even raise prices "in face of sagging demand", I think he is adopting too static a picture of monopoly power. Monopoly capitalism does not operate as a unity, as though it were a single firm. (If it did, there would be, of course, only one price consistent with maximum total profit in any given situation of total demand.) In fact there is rivalry and competition (of a kind) *between* monopolists; and it is a familiar fact that a leading form this rivalry takes is the attempt of each to improve his own position by increasing his degree of monopoly-power in the market (e.g. by advertising and sales campaigns, multiplying novelties in brands, models or design and other devices of the sales-racket).

Such attempts to capture a larger share of the market may be intensified on a sagging market, precisely because this is the form that competition increasingly takes in an age of monopoly (instead of the price-cutting of an earlier period). To the extent that each is successful (or expects to be so), his powers of maintaining or even *raising* his price will be greater. And the fact that such action, once it has become general, may result in a *fall,* instead of a rise, in the *total* profit available for all does not mean that it cannot happen. Capitalist firms (monopoly capitalists included) act first of all in their own *individual* interests, not the interests of their class as a whole; and there is constantly conflict between the interests of individual capitalists and the class interest of capitalists as a whole (a point that it is important to remember in a number of contexts other than this one).

Emile Burns

I AGREE with Maurice Dobb on the question of prices and monopoly, but would like to make two additional points:

First, it is true that *in the long run* monopolies cannot raise their prices above what the market will bear, because to some extent at least higher prices are likely to cause a fall in demand for a particular product. But it by no means follows that in the short run they can't, and don't, raise them in order to get bigger profits. The case of oil is an illustration. In 1956-57 the oil trusts thought there was going to be a constantly increasing demand for oil. Their plans for expansion, and their prices to finance the expansion, were fixed on the basis of this expectation. Then came the "recession" in U.S. and other countries; demand fell, and prices had to be reduced. But they made big profits before then.

Or take the even more obvious case of steel in the U.S. At a time when the steel industry was working far below capacity (50 per cent for some weeks) the steel trusts raised the price of steel, although this must to some extent have reduced demand. They raised the price in order to get a better profit on what they were able to sell then, and a far better profit when demand rose again.

Therefore in a very real sense monopolists can and do raise their prices "at will"; in spite of the market conditions at the time, they may be looking ahead to a revival, and their immense financial strength enables them to carry any temporary fall in demand due to their high prices.

Secondly, I am not so sure that direct price competition between monopolies is entirely a thing of the past. Dobb refers to some of the current forms of competition between monopolies. It might be useful to add that the merging of monopolies with the state provides the opportunity for all kinds of competitive pricing between the monopoly groups of different countries, for example, by means of tariffs, subsidies, and exchange rates. The French monopolies certainly got a blow in through the change in the exchange rates of the franc. The "Common Market" and the "Outer Seven" systems are, in one aspect, ways of waging price competition. To make the other fellow raise his price is just as much price competition as to lower your own.

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On Social Factors in Medicine

A. W.

I WISH to comment on the problem of social factors in medicine. There have been big advances in medical knowledge and treatment especially since the National Health Service started but still the capitalist class are healthier and can protect their health much better than the rest of the population. There are also differences between the treatment *theoretically possible* and what *in practice* the majority of the people get.

The main social factor in medicine is that it works within the restrictions imposed by its capitalist environment. Capitalism is neither humane nor humanist—profit comes before human health and human life itself. All other social factors in medicine arise from the subservience of everything in capitalism to the making of profit. The production of drugs, including life-saving antibiotics, is for profit. Most research is also done by private firms for profit.

There is not a big enough unified, national plan of medical research. Instead we have competitive, unplanned, wasteful [of scientific man-power also] research whose results are used for maximum profit for directors and shareholders.

Social factors within capitalism affect the vital processes of life itself. For example:

1. *The Air We Breathe*: The air industrial workers breathe is often dirty and poisonous. Bronchitis is the "British Disease". Directors can winter in France or the Bahamas but not miners or factory workers. Bronchitis in Merthyr (1950-53) killed four times as many men and five times as many women as in Eastbourne. (The towns are the same size). In Wales in 1955-56, 93.3 people per 1,000 consulted their doctors suffering from bronchitis compared with 40.4 per thousand in the relatively non-industrialised eastern area of England.

2. *The Food We Eat*: According to the National Food Survey, in 1957, 47 per cent of the population (mainly old age pensioners and the families of the lower paid workers) were living on diets which were deficient in foods necessary to maintain good health.

3. *Shelter*: Millions of homes in Britain are old, damp, and/or without indoor lavatories, or bathrooms.

4. *Conditions of Work*: Low wages, too long hours, and the constant pressure for increased surplus value by means of speed-up with resultant nervous tension and anxiety conditions—all these are important social factors in medicine.

5. *Education and Culture*: Capitalism's purposeful attempts to degrade the human intellect by giving us a narrow and shallow education, the ITV, the yellow and degraded press and the mass of pornographic paper-backed novels, all help to produce great mental and emotional suffering, the break-up of marriages and the family and to encourage crimes of all kinds.

6. *From Birth to Death*: The working class is denied the full benefits of modern medical science because of its class position. In Mountain Ash, South Wales, in 1958, the infantile mortality rates were more than *double* the national average. The post-neonatal rate (deaths between the ages of four weeks and one year) of miners' wives was *four* times as high as that of the "professional classes".

Readers will no doubt have heard that Queen Elizabeth II has just had another baby. It would be interesting to know the still-birth or infantile mortality rates of Royalty although with so few about nowadays the answer would no doubt be difficult to find. Another interesting experiment would be to try out the Royal medical nursing, home help and nannie services in Mountain Ash for a while. And Sir Winston Churchill's geriatric services, especially his winter treatment abroad, would be much appreciated by many pneumoconiotic Welsh miners and bronchitic Manchester workers.

Statisticians should work out sometime the accident rates (fatal and non-fatal) of building workers and building contractors, or those of coal miners and the ex-coalowners who are still receiving surplus value in the form of compensation.

I think, therefore, that the main social factor in medicine today is that it works within capitalism and both its basic search for understanding and its application of what is understood is severely limited by the limitations enforced by capitalism's constant drive for profit. *Thus many babies, children, men and women suffer ill health and premature death because the social factors of capitalism weaken or defeat the scientific attack of modern medical science on disease.*

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Communism will free medicine from these bonds—the social factors in medicine under communism will be humanist because then Man will really be "God's finest creature", and medical care will really be according to each man's need.

Medicine's historic progressive part is also humanism—its ethic of treating the suffering human being according to his need of medical aid. This humanist morality is also the morality of the Communist Party—which expresses itself in action to end class, sex and colour barriers by ending capitalism. Because no other party is for the ending of capitalism no other party has a truly humanist morality. It is only through the Communist Party, its programme and its practice that medicine's humanism (often deeply hidden) can be developed to its full maturity as the morality of the new, communist society.

Action to protect human life and health is the point of unity between the Communist Party (and the rest of the Labour movement) and medicine. The National Health Service came into being after a long struggle of the Labour movement with the help of a few doctors. The majority of doctors opposed it but after eleven years the minority of doctors in favour has now become a majority. Unity in action between the Labour movement and medical workers can be started over small things—trade union meetings to discuss smog with a doctor speaking, discussions on hospital accommodation, industrial accidents, care of old people, etc. There are many small unifying issues on which action can begin.

Our local hospital started fifty years ago from an agitation organised by the Trades Council and three doctors, our pre-N.H.S. specialist service (1946) was won by a united front of Trades Council and sixteen doctors, and our present improvements in the old people's health service (1959) followed the activities of councillors and doctors. Most people are concerned about health and are prepared to do something about improving the health services because most of us want to live healthier and longer lives and in this age of communism life is certainly man's most important possession.

To sum up, the main social factor in medicine is capitalism's influence. The restrictions it imposes on medicine will not end until capitalism is ended. Within capitalism, Communist leadership can unite the Labour movement, medical workers and the majority of the population to act to improve further on the great advances of the National Health Service and medical science. These actions will bring new sections into the broad alliance of the British people which will eventually abolish the capitalist system.

Ron Swindlehurst

THE future of welfare and care of old people, and the problem of disabled and sick persons, should be studied by every Socialist, because this is a major social concern in this country in which local authorities will increasingly play a greater part in the years ahead.

Welfare and care of the old is today the responsibility of councils; those "in need of care and attention" are dealt with by the large units of local government—county councils under the National Assistance Act 1948—which provide homes for old people. Much improvement in old folks' homes has been done in transforming the old institution home into a more social environment by the London County Council, for example. But much more must be done to solve the unsatisfactory situation that exists at present.

The two trends—living alone during the day, or living in a home or hospital all the time—are being replaced by the new trend of developing both a social outside life and the family home life. This new pattern is in the form of day hospitals (first started in the U.S.S.R.), of which thirty already function in Britain, and are both recreational and occupational, and have a team of medical staff available for physical and psychological problems; the old people going back home at night. This will empty the mental hospitals of a large number of elderly people and help to solve the poverty and loneliness of many others. Linked with this is the building of housing estates incorporating ground-floor flats or small houses with the old people living near their friends and relatives and remaining in a familiar locality.

The situation in dealing with the sick and disabled is very complex owing to the multiple disabilities and illnesses of the human body; however, there is a need for special day hospitals, short-stay and long-stay clinics for psychiatric treatment, clinics for epileptics, and social centres and workshops on a large network scale for all types of disabled people.

The whole problem means a greater expenditure in the economic field, and a development within the Health Service to extend social and medical services; and also a fight from the Labour movement outside the Health Service for improved social, welfare and health services for the old, sick and disabled.

In the administration of the Health Service the hospitals, doctors and public health are under three different bodies, which makes co-operation between curative and preventive medicine difficult. Health centres were part of the Health Service but have never been enforced. These centres were to be the responsibility of county

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councils and, in practice, would link the three arms, hospital, doctors and public health, closer together. The regional hospital boards are a selective administration, too large and undemocratic, and the smaller group hospital management committees do not function on a democratic representation basis. Here is a need for a return to the administration by county councils of the hospital service, which means reforms within local government to meet the technical requirements. Teaching hospitals should be merged into the new organisation.

Trade unions (hospital and general industry) should have representatives sitting on all levels of administration alongside professional medical and nursing organisations who do not consider themselves trade unions.

To sum up, the Labour movement should develop demands for half-way medical-social units, day-hospitals, health centres, psychiatric clinics, epileptic clinics, and for special housing for the old and chronic disabled; linked with a demand for a democratic reorganisation of Health Services and the need for higher pay, better conditions and shorter hours for Health Service staff, higher old-age and disabled pensions for the public. The Labour movement, in fighting an all-round struggle in local government and trade unions, can gain the people's confidence in their ability to rule themselves.

A Correction

SINCE the publication in the January issue of *Marxism Today* of my article on the Foundation of the Communist Party of Great Britain, I have received some additional material and some corrections from readers. This is extremely useful and any further material or corrections would be very welcome. I would at this stage like to make one correction to my article.

I wrote (on p. 4) that R. Palme Dutt came to the Communist Party of Great Britain at its foundation through the channel of the Guild Communists. This is formally speaking correct, but is misleading.

In fact, Palme Dutt's main field of political activity during and immediately after the First World War was in the I.L.P. He was also a leading member of the Student Socialist Federation and a delegate to the Cambridge Trades Council.

During the period of negotiations for the formation of a Communist Party, Palme Dutt was an active member of the Left-Wing Group in the I.L.P. along with comrades like Emile Burns, E. H. Brown and S. Saklatvala. Along with them he fought against the reformism of the MacDonald-Snowden leaders, for the affiliation of the I.L.P. to the Communist International, and with them he collaborated in the production of *The International*, organ of the Left-Wing Group.

The Foundation Convention of the Communist Party (July 31st to August 1st, 1920) was held on the basis of the merger of existing socialist groups and delegates from national and local socialist organisations. This precluded individual participation. The Left-Wing Group in the I.L.P., who supported the Foundation Congress, could not participate personally in it, as they were continuing the fight in the I.L.P. for revolutionary ideas until the Easter 1921 Congress of the I.L.P. R. P. Dutt, wishing to participate in the work of the Communist Party from its first foundation, joined the small left group of the National Guilds League—not through any support for the Guilds' ideas, which he had previously opposed, but as a channel to the Communist Party. But it was in the left wing of the I.L.P. that he carried out in the main his previous political activity.

JAMES KLUGMANN

Published by the Communist Party, 16 King Street, London, W.C.2, and printed by Farleigh Press Ltd. (T.U. all depts.) Beechwood Rise, Watford, Herts.

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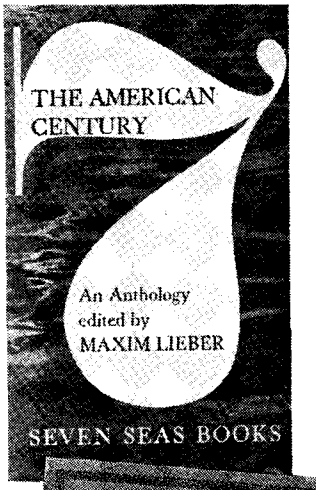

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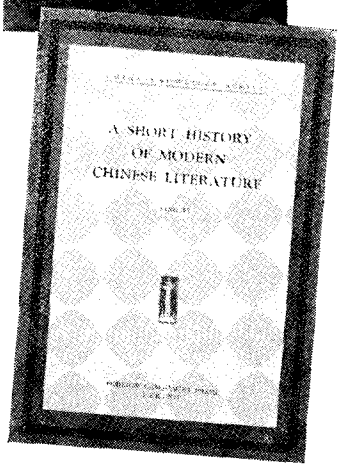

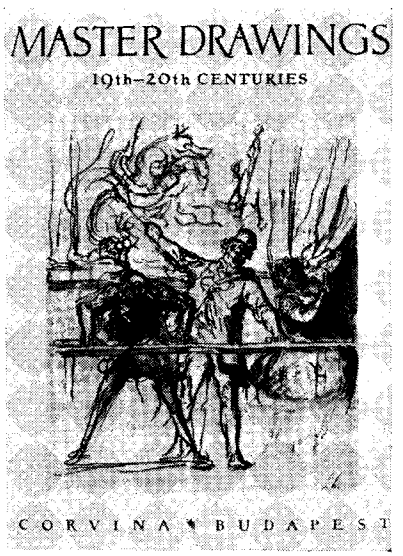

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